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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you think it is time that Saipan enacted an anti-animal cruelty statute?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

RP Downgraded

The U.S. FAA has downgraded Philippine airline operations and put them under heightened scrutiny.

ASIA...Page 15

Brad Renfro, 25

Actor Brad Renfro, whose career began with a role in "The Client," was found dead in his home.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

'Taga Air fully complies with DoT requirements' PAGE 3

Palacios hands out House chairmanships. PAGE 5

Fitial forms new economic development commission

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has created a new commission that will focus on mapping out a comprehensive economic strategy for the Commonwealth.

Called the Commission on Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the 18-member group will conduct its first meeting on Jan. 18, 2008, at the governor's conference room on Capital Hill.

See FITIAL on Page 4

Minute share of tourism pie

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas' projected arrivals from Japan comprise just a little over 1 percent of the total Japanese expected to travel overseas this year.

JTB Corp., a top travel management company in Japan, forecasts that 17.35 million Japanese will visit overseas destinations in 2008.

The Marianas Visitors Authority says the islands can expect about

See MINUTE on Page 4

KRNM may shut down

By RUTH L. TIGHE
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Public radio station KRNM may soon join the growing list of establishments that have gone out of business as a result of the CNMI's shrinking economy.

See KRNM on Page 4

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Saipan firefighter Justin Sablan demonstrates the proper way of locking the child seat during the Child Passenger Safety Technician's Class at the Aqua Resort Club yesterday afternoon. The workshop was facilitated by retired CHP officer Peggy Howard from California, Highway Patrol Sgt. Michael Hannessey from California, Occupant Protection coordinator Arnulfo Cuellar from Arizona and Injury Prevention manager Tomi St. Mars from Arizona.

Against the trend, US births way up

By MIKE STOBBE
AP MEDICAL WRITER

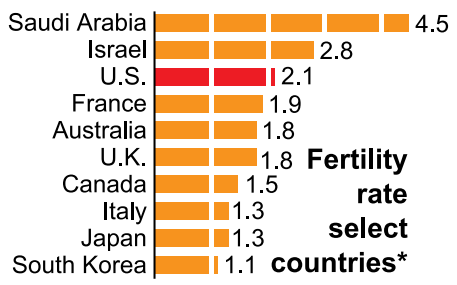
ATLANTA (AP)—Bucking the trend in many other wealthy industrialized nations, the United States seems to be experiencing a baby boomlet, reporting the largest number of children born in 45 years.

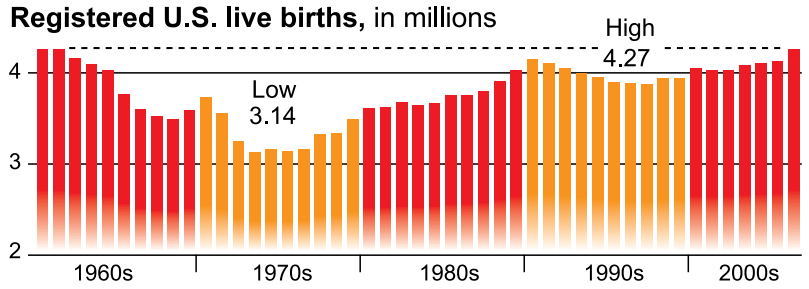
The nearly 4.3 million births in 2006

See AGAINST on Page 4

Highest number of births in 45 years

The number of births in the U.S. in 2006 was the highest since the end of the baby boom in 1961. The U.S. fertility rate has reached the required number for the population to replace itself and remain stable.





*Number of children a woman is expected to have in her life: latest data available

SOURCES: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Population Reference Bureau AP

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Local

Benavente wants better relations with US

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The new chairman of the House Committee on United States and Foreign Relations vows to bring the Commonwealth closer to the federal government.

"Unlike in previous years, this committee will be pretty busy [under my watch]," Rep. Diego T. Benavente said yesterday.

He said that his main goals are to foster better relations between the local and federal governments, and to ensure that local agencies take advantage of all federal funds available to them.

Benavente raised concern that the CNMI might be losing out on funding opportunities because of the local government's relationship with its federal counterpart.

The Fitial administration has had a rocky relationship with the Interior Department, particularly Deputy Assistant Secretary David B. Cohen and Federal Ombudsman Jim Benedetto, because of differences over the immigration federalization. But the governor seems to be trying to reach out to Cohen's potential successor, Insular Affairs Director Nikolao Pula, who visited Saipan this week. In a meeting with the governor on Tuesday, Pula approved a $10-million grant for capital improvement projects in the Commonwealth.

Benavente acknowledged that federal grant applications are a function of the Executive Branch. However, he said the Legislature could step in by putting pressure on agencies, through legislation, to pursue federal funding.

"We need the money; we need to take advantage of whatever resources are out there," he said.

Benavente also said his committee would be actively involved in the federalization issue, and help prepare the Commonwealth for the impact of the immigration bill.

"At this point, it is out of our hands. The best thing we can do is to prepare and try to minimize whatever negative impact it may have on our community," he said.

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the CNMI immigration federalization bill. If enacted, it would extend immigration law and create a federally run guest-worker program in the Commonwealth. The bill would also give the CNMI a delegate in the House with limited voting powers. Currently, all U.S. possessions except the CNMI have a delegate in Congress.

The bill is now part of an omnibus bill, which is expected to pass the U.S. Senate in early February 2008.

If the Senate passes S. 2483 without amendments, the bill may go straight to President Bush for signature. But if there are amendments, the bill will have to return to the House for concurrence.

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'Taga Air fully complies with DoT requirements'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Taga Air Charter Service Inc. president Alfred Yue yesterday refuted accusations made by a former employee that the carrier perpetuated a fraud by allegedly misrepresenting itself as a U.S.-owned company.

Responding to a letter sent to the U.S. Department of Transportation by former Taga Air director of maintenance Douglas T. Sorge, Yue said in an e-mail to the *Saipan Tribune* that Taga Air is in compliance with DoT's requirement of U.S. citizenship—25 percent foreign ownership and 75 percent U.S. ownership.

Yue also took exception to Sorge's allegation that Taga Air made changes to its ownership—Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino chairman Michael Kwan selling his shares to Yue—primarily to make the appearance that the company is a U.S.-owned entity.

"The accusation of Mr. Doug Sorge was wrong. Mr. Kwan did not have to sell his shares to me to make the company look like a U.S. company. It was and has always been a U.S. company. Mr. Kwan sold his shares simply because he didn't want to get involved in Taga [Air]'s business and he'd rather prefer to stay as a customer of Taga Air," said Yue.

He said Taga Air has engaged Hogan & Hartson L.L.P. from Washington, D.C. to liaise with DoT.

"We are doing everything possible to satisfy them and we are sure that the truth will prevail," he said in an e-mail to the *Saipan Tribune*.

Yue did not beat around the bush as to what Sorge's intention was when he wrote to DoT. "Mr. Sorge was an employee of Taga and was given an opportunity to resign from the company. I would not like to comment about Mr. Sorge's character but people in the trade would speak about him. From his action to DoT, the intention is very clear, he wants to hurt Taga Air!"

Yue, who is also managing director of Tinian Dynasty, provided *Saipan Tribune* a short ownership history of Taga Air.

He said he started the carrier back in 2002 with local pilot, Harrison Roth. When Roth died, Yue invited Pacific Island Aviation president Bob Christiansen to be a partner of Taga Air.

When PIA decided to give up its business in the region, Christiansen sold their shares. At that time, Kwan was a 25-percent shareholder of Taga Air and sold all his shares to Yue in 2006.

"Demands of air transportation increased tremendously between Tinian and Saipan since Tinian Dynasty opened. Freedom Air is the only inter-island airline that serves Guam, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. As we all know, Freedom Air stops its Tinian and Saipan route after 6pm but most of the international flights from Korea, Japan, and China arriving [on] Saipan are after midnight. For tourists that want to connect to Tinian, it is impossible if there is not another airline. I saw the opportunity and I formed Taga Air," he said.

Yue also defended him employment at Tinian Dynasty while serving as president of Taga Air.

"Yes, I work in Tinian Dynasty and so are my partners. But we put our own money together and we run our own show. Mr. Kwan does not mind we wear two hats because if Taga Air does well it just simply benefits his company more and his customers are served better. None of the shareholders in Taga Air owns any shares in Tinian Dynasty. Mr. Kwan can make his decision over me in Tinian Dynasty matter, but not in Taga Air, I make decisions on my own. Tinian Dynasty is just a big customer of Taga Air, we want to serve them well, so are all the tourists and people of CNMI," he said.

In a notarized letter to U.S. DoT transportation analyst Ronale Taylor dated May 21, 2007, Sorge said that through his observations as a member of upper management of Taga Air from May 3, 2005, to May 7, 2007, "…Taga Air management/ownership has perpetuated a fraud with your office pertaining to the ownership of their company."

"Through my observations I believe Michael Kwan does in practice retain his authority over the management of Taga Air. Alfred Yue and Thomas Liu still answer to Michael Kwan," he added.

Liu is the operations general manager of Tinian Dynasty.

DoT proposed to cancel Taga Air's air taxi certificate if it does not provide proof that the company is owned by a U.S. citizen.

In an order dated Dec. 17, 2007, Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs Andrew B. Steinberg directed "all interested persons to show cause why it should not issue an order finding that Taga Air Charter Services, Inc., is not a U.S. citizen, as defined in 49 U.S.C. 4-102 (a) (15), and its application for Commuter Air Carrier Authorization under section 41737 of the Statute is denied."

Steinberg also proposed the cancellation of Taga Air's existing air taxi registration pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 40109 (f) and 14 CFR part 298 because of the questionable status of the company's owners.

Taga Air has been given up to Jan. 22, 2008, to file objections on the order issued by the agency.

Saipan down to two power engines

Two base-load generators that had been operational at Saipan's primary power plant remained out of production even as energy demand increased yesterday afternoon. This brings to six the number of engines that are either out-of-service, or temporarily down for emergency repairs. Power plant one has eight generators.

Two crews of four persons each are working simultaneously on the units for no less than 16-hour days, but CUC said they are becoming fatigued after more than a week on this schedule.

As these emergency repairs continue, the loss of energy production—generally at 9 megawatts—causes limited and rotating outages. All major customers who have reliable generators have helped CUC by going off of the island grid to limit widespread outages. Even with the help of these major commercial clients, additional energy savings or outages are required.

The schedule for outages depends on the customer demand. Conservation will limit or help avoid outages. The power plant will not turn off the power unless absolutely necessary. The schedule is also based on only one base-load generator out of production. Should another engine fail, more outages will occur.

2pm - 4pm—Feeder Seven (7): Lower Base to Tanapag, Achugao, San Roque, As Matuis, Marpi; Kiya 2–Lower Dandan, Afetna, As Perdido, San Antonio, Chalan Piao, southern Chalan Kanoa, As Gonno, and portions of Fina Sisu.

4pm - 6pm—Kiya Four (4): San Jose, Susupe, south, to Chalan Kanoa; Feeder 1: Navy Hill; China Town

6pm - 8pm—As required if energy demand remains high – one or both grids –

- Kiya 1:Chalan Kiya, Kanat Tabla, most of Dandan, Fina Sisu (NMC), As Terlaje, part of San Vicente, Airport, main streets in As Perdido, and Koblerville
- Feeder Four (4): Sadog Tasi, Capitol Hill -Talafofo, As Teo, Papago and Kagman I, II, III

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Nine workers sue three defunct garment firms

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Nine alien workers filed a discrimination lawsuit in federal court yesterday against three defunct garment manufacturers.

Estinilie Alcaraz, Espie Baluso, Marita P. Guinnacao, Susana L. Lorenzo, Remedios E. Masangkay, Merlita Mosquera, Agnes A. Oclarino, Zenaida G. Rotao, and Jeanie DLC. Santos sued Hansoll Textile Ltd., Top Fashion Corp. and Handsome Textile Saipan Corp.

The plaintiffs sued the defendants for alleged violation of the Civil Rights Act, breach of contract, and breach of implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing.

The plaintiffs, through lawyer Stephen C. Woodruff, asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to order the defendants to pay them damages, attorney's fees, and court costs.

Woodruff stated in the complaint that Handsome Textile was used by Hansoll and Top Fashion as a mere shell and conduit for the conduct of their affairs. He said the three were joint employers by virtue of a joint enterprise.

Woodruff said that in May 2006, officials of both Top Fashion and Handsome informed the plaintiffs that Handsome will be closing down in July 2006.

He said that, beginning March 2006 until June 2006, Handsome transferred more than 100 Chinese workers to work at its sister company, Top Fashion.

The plaintiffs, who are all Filipinos, were not, however, transferred to Top Fashion.

Woodruff said the different treatment between Filipino workers and Chinese workers in terms of hiring, transfer, work assignments "occurred as a pattern and practice throughout plaintiffs' employment with defendants."

He alleged that the terminations of the nine plaintiffs were in violation of the employment contracts because there was no complete closure of defendants' business operations.

Woodruff said the purported closure was a mere pretext to discriminate against the nine based on their national origin.

Immigration wants 3 deported

The Division of Immigration has sought the deportation of a convicted felon and two other allegedly overstaying alien workers.

The Immigration Division, through the Attorney General's Office, filed separate deportation cases against Jia Huan Chen, Wen Song Li, and Yanjuan Chen.

Immigration investigator Nicolas T. Reyes stated in his report that Chen's nonresident worker's entry permit expired on Dec. 13, 2003.

Reyes said a federal court had found Chen guilty of two counts of conspiracy to collect extensions of credit by extortion. Chen, a former cutter at Sako Corp., was sentenced to 78 months in prison at the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

"Respondent [Chen] has been convicted of felony and therefore failed to comply with the terms of his entry and therefore a deportable alien," Reyes said.

With respect to Li, Immigration inspector Jay Jess San Nicolas stated in his report that the respondent has been overstaying in the CNMI for 10 months now.

San Nicolas said that Li's nonresident work entry permit expired on Feb. 15, 2007.

Li used to work as presser for Micro Pacific Inc. and Concorde Garment Manufacturing Corp.

In Chen's case, Immigration investigator John Peter stated in his report that the respondent has been overstaying in the CNMI for seven months now.

Peter said that on Dec. 17, 2007, he and a public service intern went inside KM Poker in Kagman III where they found Chen inside the cashier's booth.

Peter said that Chen lied when she said that her employment status was under renewal and that she was in fact a cashier for KM Poker. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

NMC's updated Spring dates

Qualify for an application and placement test fee waiver by enrolling for the Spring Semester at the Northern Marianas College (a savings of more than $75). Applications are currently being accepted through the Office of Admissions and Records. Here are some key dates to remember:

English Placement Test Rm. A-9	Jan. 18, 2008	1pm-4pm
OPEN Registration	Jan. 15-18, 2008	9am-6pm
LATE Registration	Jan. 19, 2008	9am-12pm
First Day of Instruction	Jan. 22, 2008	
Last Day of Instruction	May 10, 2008	

Applicants can visit the OAR Office or call 234-5498 extensions 1523 or 1540 for more information. ***(NMC)***

San Antonio Bingo Spectacular

The San Antonio Parish Council will be hosting a "Bingo Spectacular" fundraising event this Sunday, Jan. 20, 2008, from 1pm until around 5pm. This event will be held at the San Antonio Parish Social Hall.

Tickets for Bingo Spectacular are on sale at the Parish Office for $20 each. About $1,000 cash prizes will be given away and plenty of other door prizes are up for grabs. Come one come all.

AGAINST

From Page 1

were mostly due to a bigger population, especially a growing number of Hispanics. That group accounted for nearly one-quarter of all U.S. births. But non-Hispanic white women and other racial and ethnic groups were having more babies, too.

An Associated Press review of birth numbers dating to 1909 found the total number of U.S. births was the highest since 1961, near the end of the baby boom. An examination of global data also shows that the United States has a higher fertility rate than every country in continental Europe, as well as Australia, Canada and Japan. Fertility levels in those countries have been lower than the U.S. rate for several years, although some are on the rise, most notably in France.

Experts believe there is a mix of reasons: a decline in contraceptive use, a drop in access to abortion, poor education and poverty.

There are cultural reasons as well. Hispanics as a group have higher fertility rates—about 40 percent higher than the U.S. overall. And experts say Americans, especially those in middle America, view children more favorably than people in many other Westernized countries.

"Americans like children. We are the only people who respond to prosperity by saying, `Let's have another kid,'" said Nan Marie Astone, associate professor of population, family and reproductive health at Johns Hopkins University.

Demographers say it is too soon to know if the sudden increase in births is the start of a trend.

"We have to wait and see. For now, I would call it a noticeable blip," said Brady Hamilton, a statistician with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Demographers often use the word boomlet for a small and brief baby boom.

To many economists and policymakers, the increase in births is good news. The U.S. fertility rate—the number of children a woman is expected to have in her lifetime—reached 2.1. That's the "magic number" required for a population to replace itself.

Countries with much lower rates—such as Japan and Italy, both with a rate of 1.3—face future labor shortages and eroding tax bases as they fail to reproduce enough to take care of their aging elders.

But the higher fertility rate isn't all good. Last month, the CDC reported that America's teen birth rate rose for the first time in 15 years.

The same report also showed births becoming more common in nearly every age and racial or ethnic group. Birth rates increased for women in their 20s, 30s and early 40s, not just teens. They rose for whites, blacks, Hispanics, American Indians and Alaska Natives. The rate for Asian women stayed about the same.

MINUTE

From Page 1

200,000 Japanese visitors during the same period. MVA's projection is based on the current availability of 21 flights from three Japanese cities, which bring in 4,634 seats a week, as well as a load factor of 85 percent.

In its annual travel outlook report, JTB said the number of overseas travelers would be virtually the same this year as in the previous year, at 17.35 million.

Each person is expected to spend about $2,800 on a trip. This reflects higher fuel surcharges and the downward trend in exchange rates for the yen.

JTB said that destinations will face great competition from Beijing, China, which will host this year's Olympics.

"Japanese interest will naturally be high, as they are taking place in the country next door, and will concentrate on those events in which Japan has the best prospects of winning gold medals where they have previously proved elusive, including baseball…, soccer, the marathon, gymnastics, and swimming events," JTB said.

Healthy demand will also continue for Asian destinations, according to JTB.

"Demand for travel to Bali Island recovered completely in the summer of 2007, and will generally continue strong in 2008 with the ongoing popularity of both Asian beach resorts and the ranks of Las Vegas-type hotels and casinos in Macao," JTB said.

KRNM

From Page 1

Northern Marianas College, which has hosted the station since its inception 10 years ago, recently announced that due to the extent of its budget cuts it can no longer afford to do so. In the past, NMC provided space for the station, paid the cost of utilities and staff, and provided other related services. Now this will no longer be possible, NMC officials have said.

KRNM, the first and only publicly supported radio station in the CNMI, carries no advertising. It depends on listener support for its programs, conducting two fundraising drives a year in conjunction with national fund drives conducted by National Public Radio, from which KRNM receives many of its programs. Programs are also received from Public Radio International.

But funds solicited from listeners will not fill the gap KRNM now faces. Carl Pogue, station manager, was told that NMC will continue to offer space for the station until the end of Fiscal Year 2008 provided the station finds $70,000 by the end of May to carry it through until Sept. 30, 2008. Beyond that, the station will need approximately $150,000 per year to continue to operate.

Pogue said he and members of his advisory board are vigorously pursuing grant opportunities and other sources for funds. Contributions from listeners are also welcome, he said. Listener contributions will be held "in escrow," in effect—if the station does not survive, they will be returned to the contributor; if the station does survive, they will be used for the station, he promised.

The station was forced to cut back on some of its programs last year because Guam's public radio station stopped using the satellite connection that both stations had shared, and KRNM could not afford to carry the cost on its own. It has turned, instead, to feed from Radio Australia, a public radio station from "down under."

The amount of NPR and PRI programs the station carries depends largely on user contributions—some NPR and PRI programs remain on the KRNM schedule, but other available programs are no longer carried due to weak support from the listening audience.

KRNM is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission as a non-profit station; Pogue said the license had just been renewed for another eight years, which means that if the station is sold, it will nonetheless have to be operated as a non-profit, though not necessarily as the familiar listener-supported public radio.

Further information can be obtained from the station website at www.krnm.org, or from Pogue at 234-5766, or via e-mail at carlp@nmcnet.edu.

FITIAL

From Page 1

The Governor's Office said the Commission on CEDS will be prepared to comply with the Economic Development Administration Reform Act, Public Law 105-393, and to serve as one of several guides for economic development in the CNMI.

"The CEDS traditionally serves to promote development of local capacity for employment in the private sector, encourage long-term, sustainable industrial and commercial development, enhance and maintain infrastructure consistent with community needs and preserve and enhance the unique culture and environment of the CNMI for the next generation," said the Governor's Office in a statement issued yesterday.

The commission's members include Richard A. Pierce, Howard Willens and Vicki Villagomez from the Office of the Governor; Marian Aldan-Pierce from the Strategic Economic Development Council; Norbert S. Sablan, Civil Service Commission; Dr. Carmen Fernandez, Northern Marianas College; Perry Tenorio, Marianas Visitors Authority; Lynn Knight, chairperson of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana islands; Jim Arenovski, Saipan Chamber of Commerce president; James C. Lin, Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association; Michael J. Ada, Department of Commerce; Mathew Masga, DOC Tinian; Joseph S. Inos, Mayor of Rota; Jose P. San Nicolas, Mayor of Tinian; Pete Sasamoto, CNMI Water Task Force; Rex Palacios, Commonwealth Ports Authority; Anthony C. Guerrero, CUC; and one member from the CNMI Legislature.

In a letter dated Dec. 12, 2007, Fitial asked HANMI's Knight to chair the commission. Knight used to chair the Overall Economic Development Plan Commission for 1996-1997.

Additional appointees may be determined once the CEDS Commission determines its immediate needs in preparation of the update to the 1997 and 2003 DECS reports filed by the CNMI Department of Commerce.

The completed CEDS report, which should be done on a bi-annual basis, will facilitate federal grant awards for the CNMI's economic development. ***(PR)***

Palacios hands out House chairmanships

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Rep. Ray N. Yumul will be at the forefront of budget deliberations, as he has been appointed to serve as chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The overdue budget for fiscal year 2008 is on top of the agenda of the new Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

In his first memorandum as speaker, Rep. Arnold I. Palacios also appointed Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb to lead the Committee on Natural Resources; Rep. Ralph DLGTorres to the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare; and Rep. Rosemond Santos to the Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations.

Rep. Diego T. Benavente was chosen to serve as chairman of the Committee on United States and Foreign Relations.

The Committee on Commerce and Tourism will be headed by Rep. Joseph C. Reyes, and the Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communication will be led by Rep. Stanley T. Torres.

Palacios said the Lower House, under his leadership, will push for passage of a budget for the current fiscal year, which started on Oct. 1, 2007.

He added that only through an approved budget can the government properly address the needs of the Public School System and other critical areas.

He also said the Marianas Visitors Authority should be given the funding it needs to promote tourism to the Northern Marianas.

Furthermore, funding must be provided to two additional legislators. House members increased from 18 to 20 pursuant to the high court's redistricting and reapportionment order issued last year.

Labor allows transfer of five hired by employer facing sponsorship charges

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Five alien workers who were hired by an employer who is currently facing criminal charges for a sponsorship scheme have been allowed to transfer to other jobs.

Labor Administrative Hearing Officer Jerry Cody granted the transfer relief requested by Daisy C. Gopez, Nila A. Isip, Maria C. Licop, Myrna L. Campos, and Clovita S. Buzon.

Cody gave the five workers 45 days to find suitable employers.

Cody, however, cautioned the workers that if any of them is found in the future to be involved in a "sponsorship," severe sanctions may be imposed, including possible deportation.

Maria E. Pelisamen's applications to hire the five workers were denied in August 2007, based on her failure to correct multiple deficiencies with each application. The workers appealed. Pelisamen failed to appear at the Labor hearing.

Pelisamen and several of her family members were recently criminally charged in connection with an alleged scheme to fraudulently obtain work and immigration papers for workers.

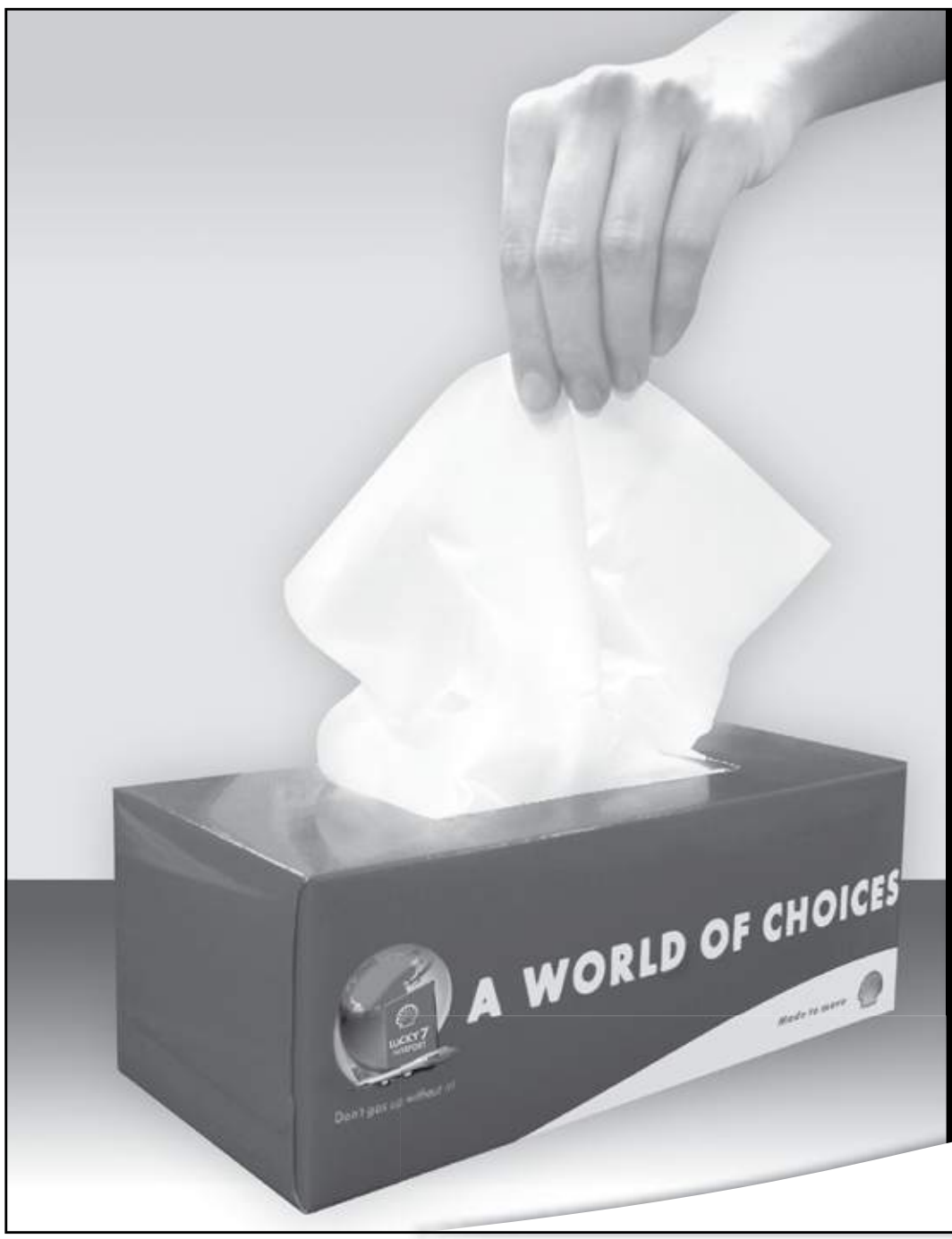
In view of the alleged "sponsorship" activities, Labor has commenced an agency investigation to further look into the activities of Pelisamen.

In his order, Cody said each worker confirmed that she does not contest the denial but merely seeks an opportunity to transfer to a new employer.

Cody said Labor Division did not oppose the transfer requests.

Cody said Labor, however, reserves the right to later move to revoke any permit now issued to a worker if, in the course of the agency investigation, it learns of specific wrongful conduct committed by the worker that would justify revoking her permit.

"I agree that each worker should be granted transfer relief and allowed 45 days to find new employers," Cody said.



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Blanco-Maratita is new chair of BOE

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Board of Education held a special meeting yesterday to elect its new officers.

Returning board member Lucia Blanco-Maratita of Tinian was named the new chairwoman while Herman T. Guerrero was named vice chairman.

Newly sworn-in member Marylou S. Ada was named the board's secretary and treasurer.

Along with the selection of officers, the board also named members to lead each committee.

Guerrero will chair the fiscal and personnel administration committee, with Ada as vice chairwoman and Blanco-Maratita as member.

The capital improvement and Public School System property committee will be chaired by Ada, Guerrero as vice chairman, and new BOE member Galvin Deleon Guerrero as a member.

Rota board representative Denise Tanya King will head the curriculum, instruction and assessment committee while Deleon Guerrero will sit as vice chairman, and Blanco-Maratita as a member.

Blanco-Maratita will chair the legislative and intergovernmental affairs, Guerrero will serve as vice chairman, while Ada will serve as a member.

Deleon Guerrero will head the scholar reform, parental involvement and student relations committee. Tanya King will be vice chairwoman and Ada a member.

Non-public school representative Scott L. Norman will also take part in the LIP and CIP committees.

Curbside parking at airport only for off-loading, loading

Due to the continued "high alert" imposed by the Transportation Security Administration under the Homeland Security Advisory System, curbside parking at the Francisco C. Ada Saipan International Airport is limited to off-loading and loading vehicles only.

Commonwealth Ports Authority acting executive director Stanley C. Torres said this restriction is outlined in the CPA Rules and Regulations, Part 2.7.

He said aside from off-loading and loading vehicles, the only other vehicles authorized to park at the terminals under this restriction are the emergency response vehicles such as police, fire, and ambulance units.

"All other vehicles will be directed to park at the main public parking lot," he said in a directive.

Torres added that Ports Authority Police will enforce these restrictions per CPA AR&R Part 2.7 and will tire lock and/or tow any vehicle not in compliance with the imposed requirements.

"Tire-locked or towed vehicles will only be released to the driver/owner upon payment of imposed fines of such violation," he said. "The general public is kindly asked to cooperate in complying with these restrictions for your safety and the security of our airport." ***(Mark Rabago)***

TEXT-2-FLY WINNERS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PTI held a promotion over the holidays in which PTI subscribers had to text in to get a chance to win a round trip ticket to the Philippines. Five lucky winners were selected and they are, from left to right, Mely Jovelo, Danny Yuso; Elias Mindanao, a representative of JG Sablan; Adachi Takaomi, and Anna de Guzman. Kathryn Barry, PTI's Regional Marketing Manager, right, awarded the winners on behalf of the company. To find out more about PTI's products, services, and activities, visit www.pticom.com or call 682-4PTI (4784).

Suit vs Mobil over alleged slippery ramp dismissed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has dismissed a claim that a Mobil gas station in Chalan Piao, Saipan violated the CNMI Consumer Protection Act when a customer slipped and hurt herself due to an allegedly slippery concrete ramp.

Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona ruled that the concrete ramp at the entrance to the gas station's store cannot reasonably be construed to be a "service" that defendants "introduced into commerce" as contemplated by the Consumer Protection Act.

The complainant, Clarinda Besong, has alleged no further facts that may sustain a claim for relief under the Act, said Manglona in granting Mobil and A.A. Enterprises Inc.'s motion to dismiss Besong's claim.

Besong filed the lawsuit in March 2007, accusing Mobil and A.A. Enterprises of being negligent when she slipped and fell as she was leaving the store on April 3, 2006. In July 2007, Besong amended her complaint to correct the name of one defendant. She later sought to add another claim against Mobil and AA Enterprises.

The two objected to the proposed amendment, arguing that the factual allegations of the complaint were insufficient to state a cause of action under the Act and that the proposed amendment would be futile, because the claim would necessarily be subject to dismissal.

The court granted Besong's request to amend her first amended complaint to attempt to state a cause of action for defendants' alleged consumer-protection violation(s) under the Act. Besong filed the second amended complaint in October 2007. Defendants responded with the filing of a motion to dismiss the second cause of action.

Besong, through counsel, argued that the legal sufficiency of her second cause of action was impliedly decided in her favor when the court allowed her to file an amended complaint and therefore the issue is now moot under the doctrine of the law of the case.

In her order, Manglona said this argument is rejected as contrary to the record of the prior proceeding and unsupportable under the law of the case doctrine.

In support of her claim for relief, Besong also argued that the concrete ramp at the entrance to defendant's store and upon which she slipped should be construed as a "service" which defendant introduced "into commerce" as contemplated by the Act.

Manglona disagreed. She said the Act provides a remedy for "unfair or deceptive acts or practices in the conduct of any trade or commerce," that applies to commerce in "services" which the merchant knows or should know will be unsafe in normal use, "including performing a service which may cause an unsafe condition."

The judge said she finds no ambiguity in the word "services," however, and the plain meaning of the word as it appears in the CPA cannot be stretched to include Besong's use of the concrete ramp at the entrance of the store.

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USCG suspends search for missing pilot

HONOLULU—Pending new information, the U.S. Coast Guard has suspended the search for the pilot of a Beechcraft 1900, which crashed Monday morning approximately seven miles southeast of Lihue International Airport, Kauai.

A 38-year-old male pilot was the only person aboard the Beechcraft, which was carrying cargo and U.S. mail on a regularly scheduled flight from Honolulu to Lihue, Kauai. Coast Guard air and surface rescue crews scoured an area nearly 200 square miles and recovered 45 mail bags, pieces of the downed plane, an inflated and empty life raft, a shoe and flight bag.

Coast Guard crews brought the debris to Nawiliwili Harbor to be transferred to officials with the Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board at Lihue International.

Air crews from Air Station Barbers Point on Oahu manned two HH-65 Dolphin helicopters and a C-130 search plane on eight different missions Monday and Tuesday. The buoy tender Walnut from Honolulu, 87-foot patrol boat Kittiwake from Nawiliwili Harbor and a 25-foot SAFE boat from Station Kauai were also dispatched to the scene and searched Tuesday, through the night and yesterday morning.

Coast Guard crews reported improved search conditions yesterday, with seas at 4 to 6 feet and easterly winds of 15 knots. The Coast Guard suspended its search at 2pm after an HH-65 crew and the crew of the Walnut reported that no more debris had been found since early this morning.

The Coast Guard was notified at 6:45am Monday of a missing aircraft bound from Honolulu to Lihue. After determining weather conditions, a reasonable search area and target, Coast Guard crews were airborne and underway at approximately 7am.

Coast Guard personnel aboard the 25-foot small boat from Station Kauai first spotted debris at 8:50am and this was confirmed two minutes later by crews aboard a C-130. The debris was in a position seven miles southeast of the airport and coincided with the last known position on radar of the Beechcraft.

"Our thoughts are with the family and friends of the pilot," said Petty Officer 1st Class Seth Haynes, a search and rescue controller with the Coast Guard's Joint Rescue Coordination Center in Honolulu. "We brought as many assets to the scene as we could and we have exhausted the search area. We had optimal search conditions today and we had as many rescuers on scene as we could." ***(USCG)***

FOUND DOG

PAWS is looking for the owner of a shaggy dog that was found near Java Joe's earlier this week. If you or someone you know lost a pet, contact PAWS at 286-0970 or via email at busenkell@gmail.com. If PAWS does not locate the dog's owner, the dog will available for adoption to a good responsible home.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

JANUARY 17, 2001

Housing project faces further delay

The Koblerville housing project faces further delay after the Senate insisted on amending a $2.4 million House appropriation to install sewer, power and water as well as road infrastructure to complete the infrastructure project. Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Executive Director Marylou S. Ada lobbied strongly in the leadership meeting to the Senators for them to immediately act on the measure so that the contractors can begin work on the expansion project.

$3.4M loan for Kobler project okayed

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation yesterday disclosed it will seal a $3.5 million loan agreement with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, which will be used as additional funding for the Koblerville expansion project on Saipan. The approved loan will be was closed today at the Commonwealth Development Authority. The loan funds would serve as interim financing for the 45 unit residential housing subdivision located at the southern part of Saipan.

Senate okays release of $50M for CIP

The Senate passed yesterday a measure appropriating $50 million for various Capital Improvement Projects following the release of the proceeds from the $60 million bond flotation. Of the $50 million fund, $25 million will come from the proceeds of the bond while the remaining $25 million will come from the Covenant Section 702 Funding as specified under House Bill 12-130.

JANUARY 17, 2002

Prospects bright for Saipan casino

Despite a Constitutional ban on gambling, it will not be necessary to amend the CNMI Constitution to allow the establishment of a casino on Saipan since the language of the charter itself allows for exemptions. Senate legal counsel Tony Cabrera pointed this out, in reaction to a recent report about a consortium of American, Japanese and Korean investors who are eyeing Saipan as a possible location for a proposed casino.

No plans yet to change GHLIP rules

Despite the end of the comment period, the Northern Mariana Island Retirement Fund has no immediate plans of implementing the proposed changes in the rules and regulations governing the Group Health and Life Insurance Program. Fund legal counsel Kathleen Troy-Rucker said they will further study some of the comments submitted by individuals and different groups and see whether they can feasibly incorporate the suggestions into the proposed changes.

PSS to push for increase in federal funds

Still reeling from a financial crisis compounded by the September 11 attacks, the Public School System is poised to make an appeal for more federal assistance, pending executive action on a US measure that will reauthorize federal funds to insular areas and states. The PSS is upbeat in receiving funding increases from the CNMI's estimated $5.4 million share under the US appropriation legislation, which will be made available in July through September this year.

JANUARY 17, 2003

DPH saves $1.8M in expenditure

Public Health Secretary James U. Hofschneider said his department has saved $1.8 million in expenditure during fiscal year 2002. In a press conference yesterday, Hofschneider said that DPH recorded $40.5 million expenditure in 2002, the lowest in three years. Records showed that the DPH spent $42.2 million in FY 2000 and $42.5 million in FY 2001.

Customs officers from Palau to start dog detector course

The CNMI Customs Division disclosed yesterday that its first Dog Detector Handler Course will officially begin today, as two Palau customs officers undergo a 10-week training on Saipan. Dog Detector Handler Facility senior instructor Freddie Guajardo said the Palauan customs officers arrived on island Wednesday. They are scheduled to start their active dog detector handler course at 8:30am today.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A true horse race

This month is offering a serial look at the strengths and weaknesses of our candidates for president. Iowa provided insight into their ground games: Barack Obama stirred the young and the loyal, while Hillary Rodham Clinton fizzled; Mike Huckabee energized the Christian right, where support for Mitt Romney failed to gel. Then New Hampshire brought out the mainstays of the parties: Older women warmed to Clinton and propelled her to a comeback; John McCain tapped old loyalists.

Now, in between those opening rounds and Super-Duper Tuesday, those candidates face two more telling tests. Nevada gives the first look by Western voters and also a measure of union strength; South Carolina puts candidates before the first electorate with a significant black population. It is no stretch to imagine that at the end of these four races, the relative electability of the leading candidates will be clear for all to see—and just in time for voters across the nation to cast the primary season's definitive ballots.

Many pundits suggest that, on the Democratic side, it is Clinton who is best positioned. She enjoys strong support among labor unions, which ought to help her in Nevada, and she and her husband have long run well among African Americans, which ought to help in South Carolina. But both those assumptions seem vulnerable to Obama's new momentum. The Culinary Workers union, said to be one of Nevada's most significant, voted last week to endorse him. As for black voters, who could make up nearly half of South Carolina's Democratic electorate, their historic support for the Clintons has never been put to a test quite like this.

If John Edwards cannot win Nevada or South Carolina—one where he's polled well, the other his home state—his withdrawal would become all but inevitable and would raise the question of where his supporters will land when they scatter. Will they affiliate their economic populism with Clinton's labor sympathies, or will they be drawn to Obama's call for a new political discourse? The answer there could decide the Democratic nominee.

On the Republican side, the two contests will determine whether Rudolph W. Giuliani guessed correctly that he could skip the early states and jump in for the big ones in time to rescue his party from indecision. His strategy has been vindicated by the electorate so far, which has split along increasingly sharp fault lines—there is no sign of any rapprochement between economic and social conservatives, no hint that Huckabee's backers and McCain's supporters see much in the way of common purpose. The only problem for Giuliani is that he's dropped like a stone in national polls.

This quick succession of primaries is what has given American politics its singular excitement in 2008. It is all the more thrilling for what it will offer up Feb. 5: the chance to select two candidates to debate the nation's future at this vital moment.

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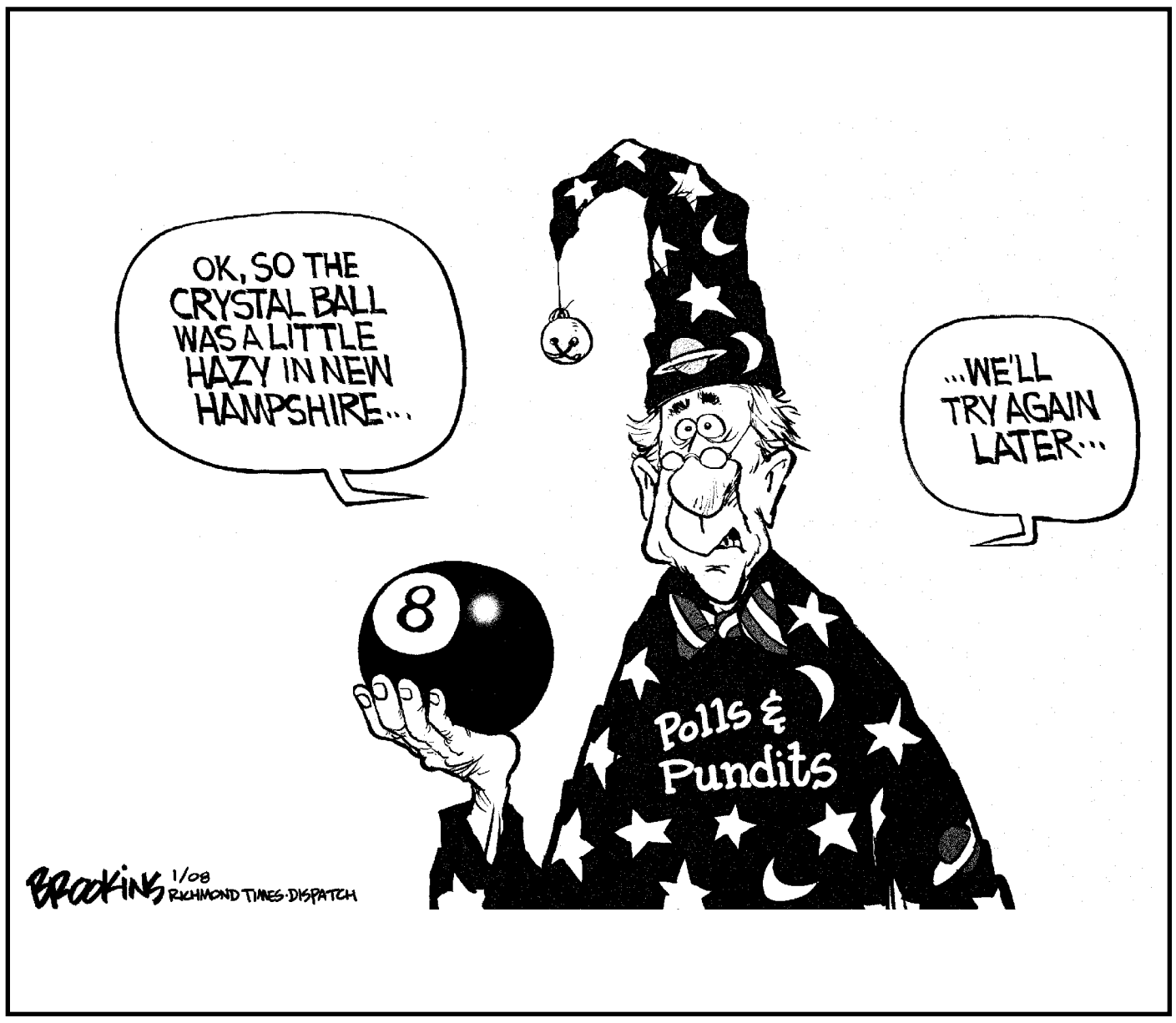

OK, SO THE CRYSTAL BALL WAS A LITTLE HAZY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE...
...WE'LL TRY AGAIN LATER...
8
Polls & Pundits
BROOKINS 1/08 RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Screen sucking

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC (www.bizresults.org). They can be contacted at rikv@bizresults.org

Glenn Wilson, a psychiatrist at King's College, London, gave an IQ test to a group of people in 2005. Wilson then had the same group take the same test, but this time they were distracted by emails and phone calls. They were told to ignore the distractions; however, the group's average IQ score dropped an average of 10 points!

Technology has allowed individuals to save some time in a lot of ways, but it has also had a major impact on their ability to perform basic tasks, and from Wilson's studies, it has also dumbed people down by causing them to be less efficient and not allow them to concentrate on the task at hand. The FFA and the University of Michigan found that people who switch between different types of tasks, such as surfing the Internet, emails or talking on the phone, lose between 20 to 40 percent of their efficiency.

A 10 percent drop in IQ points and a 40 percent drop in efficiency, but that's not all! Mary Czerwinski, at Microsoft Research Labs, discovered that 40 percent of the time, we wander off in a new direction when an interruption ends. In another study at UC Irvine, researcher Gloria Mark discovered that each knowledge worker she studied spent only 11 minutes on any given project before being interrupted. In addition, it would take about 25 minutes on average to return to the original task.

The hidden cost of all our distractions can be staggering when you consider the lost productivity and frustration created by losing our train of thought. The *New York Times* stated: "The central danger of interruptions, Czerwinski realized, is not really the interruptions at all. It is the havoc they wreak with our short-term memory: 'What the heck was I just doing?'"

All the gadgets and gizmos begging for our attention is not the only problem affecting our lack of productivity; experts tell us that we interrupt ourselves almost as much as we let others do it. This is caused by incessantly checking email several times during the day, surfing the Net, chatting on the phone, or doing anything else that causes us to break our concentration. Some individuals are even compulsive in their ability to create distractions they impose on themselves. Just as an alcoholic craves the next drink, a compulsive techno-addict has their computer rigged so that a new email makes a sound, and like a Pavlovian dog, they automatically drop what they were doing to check their email.

One study found that 55 percent of knowledge workers told researchers they open their email immediately after it arrives, no matter how busy they are. Psychologists have even labeled this growing technology addiction by calling it "Online Compulsive Disorder." Edward Hallowell, a Harvard Medical School professor, simply calls it "Screen Sucking."

Does any of this sound familiar to you? Do you have difficulty getting things done because of constant interruptions? Do you have the courage to admit that you are a victim of Screen Sucking, and has it become an Online Compulsive Disorder?

If you haven't gone over the edge yet, there may still be a cure. Management guru, Peter Drucker, wrote almost 40 years ago in his seminal book, The Effective Executive: "To be effective, every knowledge worker, and especially every executive, therefore needs to be able to dispose of time in fairly large chunks. To have dribs and drabs of time at his disposal will not be sufficient even if the total is an impressive number of hours."

The key, then, according to Drucker is to schedule large chunks of time where you can work uninterrupted. This becomes more difficult as new technology is created to supposedly make our lives easier and more efficient, but it is imperative for you to take control of your techno-gear and demonstrate you are the master.

Some individuals schedule two or three-hour blocks of time each day where they do not allow any interruptions. Others come to work earlier in the morning and spend an hour or two of distraction-free time to accomplish more than they could do during a busy day.

This may also be the answer if you believe your IQ has dropped 10 points because of interruptions. A New York Times reporter who interviewed recent winners of the MacArthur "genius" grants discovered the importance of finding quiet time to think and work. An overwhelming number of the recipients commented they keep their cell phones, laptops, and iPods off or away when they were in transit so they could use the downtime for thinking. Schedule quiet, uninterrupted time so you can focus on the important issues in your businesses and life, and don't allow your screen to suck any more of your brain cells than you can afford to lose.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Values for creating a meaningful life

By JIM RAYPHAND
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

This is an attempt to provoke some critical thought and to blend some general perspectives on life as it is for both people with and without disabilities.

It still baffles me when I hear people referring to individuals with disabilities as, "that kind", or as other more disparaging descriptors, as if DISABILITY was some kind of alien nation dropping *its kind* on earth for a go at life as a human. Somehow through having or acquiring a disability, a person is inevitably branded as something other than simply a man, woman, boy or girl. The label, more often than not, overshadows the person…for example, the "wheelchair man" or the "retard" or the "handicap"…you know what I'm talking about….any semblance of a person, at least by some perspectives, gets lost behind the disability. The life of an individual with a disability is often laden with ridicule, indifference and general disrespect…with sentiments like, "those people can't do that" or "they don't know nothing [sic]" being the anthem lyrics for our colleagues.

I got to thinking about how common it actually is to blanket people with disabilities with sweeping, negative stereotypes and that maybe we don't talk enough about our commonalities. For one thing, we are all human…that certainly should count for something. I began to take further notice of our likenesses and how certain themes ring true for just about everyone I know, disabled or otherwise. Despite race, color, gender, religious affiliation, or disability, we all share some common values for creating a meaningful life. Rather than just telling you that we have similarities, I thought I'd share a list of ten core values which, for nearly twenty years, have served as a general guidance for life planning on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities (developed by and elicited from Partners in Policy Making)…you be the judge as to whether these values apply to your own life and whether "those people" are really that much different than the rest of us:

(1) Chances to Contribute: People (with disabilities) must be able to enjoy the benefits of true productivity through employment and/or contributions as members of their community;

(2) Homes: People (with disabilities) must be able to live in homes of their choice with the supports they need;

I got to thinking about how common it actually is to blanket people with disabilities with sweeping, negative stereotypes and that maybe we don't talk enough about our commonalities.

(3) Control: People (with disabilities) must be able to exercise choice and control in all areas of their lives;

(4) Choice: People (with disabilities) must have the freedom to choose how they want to live their lives and receive the support they need;

(5) Respect and Dignity: People (with disabilities) must be treated with respect and dignity;

(6) Continuity: People (with disabilities) need continuity in their lives through families and neighborhood concerns. A full life offers opportunities to be part of the community. This includes: (i) ***Recreation*** - Sporting events, movies, shopping, athletic competitions, etc., (ii) ***Lifelong Learning*** - Community education programs, arts and crafts, volunteer opportunities and other ways to add skills and learn new things, and (iii) ***Spiritual Growth*** - Religious faith and faith communities offer opportunities to join with others who share a specific belief.

(7) Full, Active Participation: People (with disabilities) must be able to enjoy full mobility and accessibility that allows active participation in community life;

(8) Free Speech: People (with disabilities) are entitled to the full meaning of the right to free speech. The ability to communicate, in whatever form, must be available to every person (with a disability);

(9) Real Friendships: People (with disabilities) need real friendships, not just relationships with paid staff. Family and friends are at the center of a good life. Everyone needs people to share the good times with and to support him or her in challenging times. Family and friends aren't the same as paid assistants;

(10) People First: People with disabilities are people first. They are not "the handicapped" or "the disabled." Using people first language is essential – no labels! Labels are for Jars!

Note: Above list of 10 core values was taken from "Partners In Living", an online course offered through the Minnesota Governor's Council On Developmental Disabilities.

Jim Rayphand is a program manager for the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc.

Myths about breaking our foreign oil habit

By ROBERT BRYCE
Special to The Washington Post

Bryce, a fellow at the Institute for Energy Research, is author of the forthcoming Gusher of Lies: The Dangerous Delusions of 'Energy Independence.'

With oil prices still flirting with $100 a barrel, everyone is talking about the need for "energy independence." Late last year, President Bush signed the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007; Sen. John McCain declared, "We need energy independence"; and Sen. Barack Obama called for "serious leadership to get us started down the path of energy independence."

This may all be good politics. But the idea that the United States, the world's single largest energy consumer, can be independent of the $5 trillion-per-year energy business—the world's single biggest industry—is ludicrous. The push for energy independence is based on false premises. Here are a few of the most pernicious.

1. Energy independence will reduce or eliminate terrorism.

In a speech last year, former CIA Director James Woolsey told American motorists: "The next time you pull into a gas station to fill your car with gas, bend down a little and take a glance in the side-door mirror. ... What you will see is a contributor to terrorism against the United States." Woolsey is known as a conservative, but plenty of liberals also eagerly adopted the mantra that America's foreign oil purchases are funding terrorism.

But the hype doesn't match reality. Remember, the two largest suppliers of crude to the U.S. market are Canada and Mexico—neither exactly known as a belligerent terrorist haven.

Moreover, terrorism is an ancient tactic that predates the oil era. It does not depend on petrodollars. And even small amounts of money can underwrite spectacular plots; as the 9/11 Commission Report noted, "The 9/11 plotters eventually spent somewhere between $400,000 and $500,000 to plan and conduct their attack." G.I. Wilson, a retired Marine Corps colonel who has fought in Iraq and written extensively on terrorism and asymmetric warfare, calls the conflation of oil and terrorism a "contrivance." Support for terrorism "doesn't come from oil," he says. "It comes from drugs, crime, human trafficking and the weapons trade."

2. A big push for alternative fuels will break our oil addiction.

The new energy bill requires that the country produce 36 billion gallons of biofuels per year by 2022. That sounds like a lot, but the United States uses more than (ital) 320 billion (end ital) gallons of oil per year, of which nearly 200 billion gallons are imported.

So biofuels alone cannot wean the United States off oil. Let's say the country converted all the soybeans grown by American farmers into biodiesel; that would provide only about 1.5 percent of total annual U.S. oil needs. If the entire U.S. corn crop was devoted to producing ethanol, it would supply only about 6 percent of U.S. oil needs.

What about cellulosic ethanol, the much-hyped biofuel that can be produced from grass, wood and other plant sources? Its commercial viability is a bit like the tooth fairy: Many believe in it, but no one ever actually sees it. Even with heavy federal subsidies, it took 13 years before the corn-ethanol sector was able to produce 1 billion gallons of fuel per year. Two and a half decades elapsed before annual corn-ethanol production reached 5 billion gallons, as it did in 2006. But now Congress is demanding that the cellulosic-ethanol business magically produce many times that volume of fuel in just 15 years. It won't happen.

3. Energy independence will let America choke off the flow of money to nasty countries.

Fans of energy independence argue that if the United States stops buying foreign energy, it will deny funds to petro-states such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Hugo Chavez's Venezuela. But the world marketplace doesn't work like that. Oil is a (ital) global (end ital) commodity. Its price is set globally, not locally. Oil buyers are always seeking the lowest-cost supplier. So any Saudi crude being loaded at the Red Sea port of Yanbu that doesn't get purchased by a refinery in Corpus Christi or Houston will instead wind up in Singapore or Shanghai.

4. Energy independence will mean reform in the Muslim world.

The most vocal proponent is New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, who argues that the United States should build "a wall of energy independence" around itself and thereby lower global oil prices: "Shrink the oil revenue and they will have to open up their economies and their schools and liberate their women so that their people can compete. It is that simple." When the petro-states are effectively bankrupt, Friedman argues, we'll see "political and economic reform from Algeria to Iran."

If only it were that easy. Between about 1986 and 2000, oil prices generally stayed below $20 per barrel; by the end of 1998, they were as low as $11 per barrel. As Alan Reynolds pointed out in May 2005 in the conservative National Review Online, this prolonged period of "cheap oil did nothing to promote economic or political liberty in Algeria, Iran, or anywhere else. This theory has been tested—and it failed completely."

5. Energy independence will mean a more secure U.S. energy supply.

Think back to 2005: After hurricanes ravaged the Gulf Coast, chewing up refineries as they went, several southeastern U.S. cities were hit with gasoline shortages. Thankfully, they were short-lived. The reason? Imported gasoline, from refineries in Venezuela, the Netherlands and elsewhere. Throughout the first nine months of 2005, the United States imported about 1 million barrels of gasoline per day. By mid-October 2005, just six weeks after Hurricane Katrina, those imports soared to 1.5 million barrels per day.

So we're woven in with the rest of the world—and going to stay that way. Today, in addition to gasoline imports, the United States is buying crude oil from Angola, jet fuel from South Korea, natural gas from Trinidad, coal from Colombia and uranium from Australia. Those imports show that the global energy market is just that: global. Anyone who argues that the United States will be more secure by going it alone on energy hasn't done the homework.

Letters to the Editor

Health risks of ordnance disposal

I recently read the story about the EPA permit for handling vintage ordnance. I live near a contaminated military base in Wisconsin and as a community member have been working on military cleanup issues for more than 17 years.

There are alternatives to open burning/open detonation which, by definition, has no emissions controls. I would like to know if there is an environmental group or local government body that we could be interested in additional information that we can send by e-mail. At the Massachusetts Military Reservation, for example, an increased incidence of breast cancer has been associated with increased proximity to bombing ranges.

In summary, communities need to be aware of the physical dangers of munitions, but they should also be aware there also significant environmental health issues risks associated with disposal of conventional munitions.

Laura Olah
Executive Director
Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
Merrimac, WI

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼77°	▲80° ▼75°	▲82° ▼75°	▲80° ▼73°	▲80° ▼73°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼76
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼77
Chuuk	Cloudy	▲90	▼80
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲86	▼78
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼73
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲85	▼76

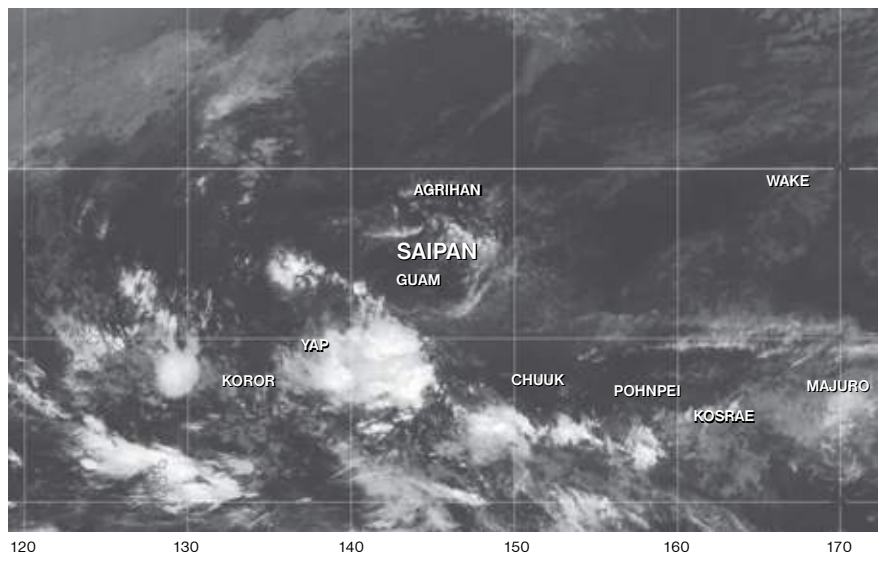
Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Sunny	▲78	▼68
Beijing	Cloudy	▲30	▼18
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲63	▼55
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲76	▼67
London	Rain	▲46	▼41
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲69	▼46
Manila	Cloudy	▲84	▼73
Melbourne	Sunny	▲84	▼68
Miami	Cloudy	▲81	▼61
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲39	▼28
Osaka	Cloudy	▲39	▼27
Paris	Rain/Snow	▲44	▼41
Pusan	Rain/Snow	▲39	▼25
Rome	Showers	▲51	▼43
Salem	Sunny	▲43	▼33
San Francisco	Sunny	▲59	▼44
Seoul	Cloudy	▲28	▼13
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲45	▼38
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲41	▼30

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
03:12AM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
07:45AM Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
01:44PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
09:33PM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JAN. 16, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough extends eastward from 4N130E to EQ150E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the trough are found in the area bounded by 10N138E to 10N144E to 6N149E to 4N159E to 2N159E to 2N148E to 4N141E to 7N138E back to 10N138E. This includes Yap but is south of Chuuk and Pohnpei, south of the trough. Scattered showers are occurring well south of Palau between the equator and 2N from 130E to 134E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers west of the Marianas within 50 miles of a line from 11N142E to 15N135E. Trade-wind convergence is also producing scattered showers in the area bounded by 3N160E to 6N160E to 9N170E to 6N180 to 3N180 back to 3N160E including Kosrae, Kwajalein and Majuro. A cold front extends from 25N180 to 23N174E, then continues as a shear line to 19N155E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 200 miles north of this boundary. Another cold front extends from 25N135E to 21N130E and beyond. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and northwest of this front.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47AM	6:07PM
Friday	6:47AM	6:07PM
Saturday	6:47AM	6:08PM
Sunday	6:47AM	6:09PM
Monday	6:47AM	6:09PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:48PM	01:05AM
Friday	01:40PM	02:07AM
Saturday	02:39PM	03:12AM
Sunday	03:42PM	04:18AM
Monday	04:48PM	05:21AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contribution are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	1,2,4,5,6,7
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Manila

CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:30am	11:10am	Daily

Guam-Nagoya

CO 971	7:45am	10:30am	1,2,4,5,6,7
NW 023	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily
CO 904	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 078	8:30am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily

Guam-Narita

JO 982	4:15am	7:00am	Daily
CO 961	7:20am	9:55am	Daily
CO 006	1:00pm	3:45pm	Daily
JO 942	3:30pm	6:15pm	Daily
NW 081	3:55pm	6:50pm	Daily
NW 073	4:15pm	7:00pm	Daily
CO 963	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily

Guam-Hongkong

CO 910	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Saipan-Shanghai

MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6

ARRIVALS

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,4,5,6,7
CO 9316	3:30am	4:20am	2
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	10:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
OZ 607	6:50pm	2:50am+1	3,7 via Busan
OZ 607	7:30pm	2:50am+1	4 via Busan

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Guam

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Manila-Saipan

CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily

Nagoya-Guam

NW 024	10:00am	2:40pm	Daily
CO 970	11:30am	4:00pm	Daily
CO 905	8:25pm	12:50am+1	1,3,4,5,6,7

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya

Narita-Guam

JO 941	9:30am	2:05pm	Daily
NW 074	9:45am	2:25pm	Daily
CO 962	11:05am	3:35pm	Daily
CO 007	5:15pm	9:50pm	Daily
NW 082	8:30pm	1:15am+1	Daily
CO 964	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
JO 981	9:30pm	2:05am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

Shanghai-Saipan

MU 589	8:05am	3:00am+1	1,5

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA
5,873.900
Down 145.900
(-2.42%)

HONG KONG
24,896.72
Down 941.06
(-3.64%)

JAKARTA
2,589.395
Down 140.636
(-5.15%)

TOKYO
13,744.93
Down 227.70
(-1.63%)

K. LUMPUR
1,505.71
Down 1.33
(-0.09%)

MANILA
3,351.66
Down 95.63
(-2.77%)

SINGAPORE
3,344.53
Up 3,344.53
(+0.00%)

SEOUL
1,714.38
Down 32.57
(-1.86%)

BANGKOK
763.81
Down 15.98
(-2.05%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
12,501.11
-277.04

NASDAQ
2,417.59
-60.71

S&P
1,380.95
-35.30

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.1283
British Pound	0.5093
Canadian Dollar	1.0182
Chinese Renmbi	7.237
Euro	0.6734
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7952
Indian Rupee	39.283
Indonesian Rupiah	9437
Japanese Yen	106.28
Malaysian Ringgit	3.2575
New Zealand Dollar	1.2826
Philippine Peso	40.68
Singapore Dollar	1.4268
South Korean Won	938.6
Swiss Franc	1.0846
Taiwan Dollar	32.255
Thailand Baht	29.755

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Oil falls sharply on economy worries

NEW YORK (AP)— Oil futures dropped sharply Tuesday as a dismal retail sales report confirmed a growing view among investors that the economy is slowing and that demand for energy is likely to fall.

Investors who have already been selling heavily on concerns about a weak economy dumped contracts again after the Commerce Department said retail sales fell by 0.4 percent in December. Not only was the drop much worse than the 0.1 percent analysts expected, it also was evidence that not even the holiday shopping season could encourage wary consumers to spend freely.

Light, sweet crude for February delivery fell $2.30 to settle at $91.90 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

President Bush contributed to the concerns by warning that soaring oil prices could cause an economic slowdown in the United States.

"High energy prices can damage consuming economies," Bush said in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, before meeting with that country's King Abdullah.

Bush made his comments as part of a plea to OPEC to boost production to bring oil prices down. The market shrugged off Saudi Oil Minister Ali Naimi's response that supplies are adequate.

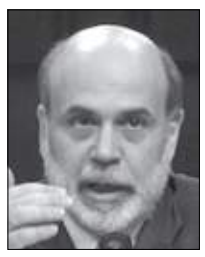
"The overall tone of the market here is just reflecting a lot of the demand uncertainty out there," said Tim Evans, an analyst at Citigroup Inc.

Expectations that the Energy Department's weekly inventory report will show supplies of crude oil and refined products rose last week also weighed on futures prices.

At the pump, meanwhile, gas prices fell 0.9 cent overnight to a national average of $3.061 a gallon, according to AAA and the Oil Price Information Service. Gas prices have fallen lately after following oil prices' rise to a record $100.09 a barrel two weeks ago. But retail gas prices remain nearly 83 cents higher than they were one year ago.

Consumer spending drop raises new fears

WASHINGTON (AP)—Consumer spending, the critical bulwark that has kept the country out of a recession, is showing signs of cracking. Retail sales plunged by 0.4 percent last month as consumers battered by a sinking housing market, rising unemployment and the credit crunch, handed retailers their worst Christmas in five years.



Bernanke

The Commerce Department's sales report Tuesday was just the latest in a string of weaker-than-expected numbers that have economists worried that the current economic expansion, now in its seventh year, could be in danger of faltering.

Analysts said the worry is that all the problems weighing on the economy could prompt consumers - who account for two-thirds of economic activity - to sharply limit or even stop shopping. Already, consumer confidence has slipped significantly amid the oil price spiral and the continuing housing slump. At the same time, some of the nation's biggest financial institutions have reported billions of dollars in losses stemming from a meltdown in the mortgage market.

"There is certainly enough out there to make people worry," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's in New York. "We think we are getting very close to a recession."

Stocks fall sharply on economic woes

NEW YORK (AP)—A growing conviction that the U.S. is headed toward recession sent Wall Street plunging Tuesday, with weak retail sales figures and disappointing results from Citigroup Inc. exacerbating investors' pessimistic mood. The Dow Jones industrials tumbled nearly 280 points.

Investors backed away from stocks amid growing concerns that consumer spending will wane and contribute to an economic downturn. The latest evidence that consumers are retrenching came from the Commerce Department, which said retail sales fell in December while it also revised its November figures lower. Spending by consumers, which accounts for more than two-thirds of U.S. economic activity, has been key to staving off economic slowdowns in recent years.

Investors have sold stocks sharply lower so far this year on increasing worries about the economy. The Dow fell 277.04, or 2.17 percent, to 12,501.11, the latest in a string of triple-digit slides.

Broader stock indicators also lost ground. The Standard & Poor's 500 index dropped 35.30, or 2.49 percent, to 1,380.95, and the Nasadaq composite index lost 60.71, or 2.45 percent, closing at 2,417.59.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Citi loses almost $10B, slashes dividend

NEW YORK (AP)—Bad bets on mortgages led to a $10 billion loss for Citigroup Inc. in the final quarter of last year, the largest in its 196-year history. As a new wave of weak economic data intensified fears of a recession, the nation's biggest bank also cut jobs, slashed its dividend and turned to foreign investors for an infusion of cash. The biggest hit came from a $18.1 billion write-down in the value of its investment portfolio. But the bank also set aside $4 billion on Tuesday to cover anticipated losses on loans to U.S. consumers—a sign that deflated home prices, high energy and food costs, and rising unemployment are making it difficult for many customers to keep up with their payments.

Merrill Lynch to get $6.6 billion

NEW YORK (AP)—Merrill Lynch & Co. said Tuesday it is getting a fresh cash investment of $6.6 billion to strengthen its balance sheet, led by three foreign investment groups. Merrill Lynch has been raising capital after losing billions of dollars on bad bets in the mortgage market. Rising delinquencies and defaults among mortgages have forced banks to write down the value of bonds and debt backed by the troubled loans. That, in turn, has put their levels of spare capital under pressure. The Korean Investment Corp., Kuwait Investment Authority and Mizuho Corporate Bank will receive a special class of stock for their combined $6.6 billion investment.

EMI music co. to cut up to 2,000 jobs

LONDON (AP)—EMI, the storied home to The Beatles and The Rolling Stones that was taken over by a private equity firm last year, announced Tuesday it would cut about a third of the company's jobs in a restructuring plan aimed at reassuring its restless artists, countering plummeting CD revenue and saving 200 million pounds ($400 million) a year. London-based EMI Group PLC said sales, marketing, manufacturing and distribution would be combined in a single global division as part of a "fundamental restructuring" of its recorded music unit. The changes will entail the loss of 1,500 to 2,000 jobs from the current work force of 5,500 over the next six months.

Wall Street pounds Intel on 4Q results

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Intel Corp.'s profit leaped 51 percent as sales of microprocessors accelerated in the fourth quarter, but its shares plummeted on signs that the world's largest semiconductor maker is feeling the pinch of an ailing U.S. economy. The Santa Clara-based company's results, released after the market closed Tuesday, narrowly missed Wall Street's profit and sales expectations. The results jolted investors who thought the technology bellwether was shielded from the housing and lending morass that has crimped consumers' discretionary spending, analysts said.

$1,500
Cash Reward

The NMI Council for the Humanities is offering a $1,500 cash reward for the return of three desktop computers stolen from the Council's office in Dandan on the evening of 6 January 2008.

Individuals in possession of these computers or knowledge of their current whereabouts are asked to contact Council staff at telephone number 235-4785 during regular working hours. All information will be kept confidential.

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Baby, toddler killed in mothers' arms

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—A baby, a toddler and their mothers were shot to death while the women held their children in their arms, police said Tuesday as officers searched for two men seen running from the victims' home. All four victims were shot repeatedly late Monday, said Indianapolis Assistant Police Chief Eva Talley-Sanders. All died at the house on the city's north side except for 4-month-old Charlii Yarrell, who died at a hospital. "I can't imagine what kind of evil it takes to shoot two women and the innocent children in their arms," Police Chief Michael Spears said at a news conference. The other victims were Jordan Hunt, 23 months; his mother, Gina Hunt, 24; and Charlii's mother, Andrea Yarrell, 24. Police said they had identified people they wish to question and were looking for them, but they would not name the people or describe them.

Megachurch leader surrenders on charge

ATLANTA (AP) -- The 80-year-old leader of a suburban Atlanta megachurch turned himself over to authorities Tuesday night to face a charge that he lied under oath. A warrant for the arrest of Archbishop Earl Paulk was issued Monday after a months-long probe by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. The longtime pastor of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit at Chapel Hill Harvester Church made a deal with the Cobb County Sheriff's office to surrender within 48 hours, said Nancy Bodiford, executive assistant to Sheriff Neil Warren. Paulk's defense attorney, Joel Pugh, said the warrant took the family by surprise.

Guilty plea expected in body parts case

NEW YORK (AP) -- A former oral surgeon has agreed to plead guilty to charges that he orchestrated a grisly plot to plunder corpses and sell body parts for transplants, his lawyer said Tuesday. Prosecutors say Michael Mastromarino, 44, was making millions by covertly carving up hundreds of corpses at a Brooklyn funeral home and selling the parts for dental implants, hip replacements and other procedures nationwide. Prosecutors said that the cadavers were looted without permission or proper screening for diseases and that an untold number of patients were unknowingly exposed to infection. Among the bodies was that of "Masterpiece Theatre" host Alistair Cooke, who died in 2004.

Cops: Teen gang made girls prostitutes

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) -- Several teenage gang members have been arrested on suspicion of forcing girls as young as 12 into a prostitution ring, police said Tuesday. After befriending the girls and getting them high, Varrio Central gang members took them to some regular customers and then sought other men by trolling apartment complexes, offering the girls' services for $50, Fort Worth police Lt. Ken Dean said. The gang apparently targeted runaways and other girls with unstable homes, and if the girls refused to have sex for money the members beat and sexually assaulted them and threatened their families, Dean said.

Pregnant Marine didn't feel threatened

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. (AP)—A 20-year-old pregnant Marine who disappeared in December told victims' advocates at Camp Lejeune that she didn't feel unsafe in the presence of the colleague now wanted in her death, Marine Corps officials said Tuesday. Marine Cpl. Cesar Armando Laurean never violated the military protective order directing him to stay away from Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach, continued to report for work on time in the weeks after her disappearance and denied having any kind of sexual contact with her, said Col. Gary Sokoloski, the judge advocate general officer for the II Marine Expeditionary Force. "At no time did she indicate that she was threatened by Cpl. Laurean," Sokoloski said. "When she was asked if she felt threatened by Cpl. Laurean, she said she did not feel threatened."

Missing Oregon climbers reach safety

TIMBERLINE LODGE, Ore. (AP) -- A pair of climbers who misjudged the weather on Mount Hood and got caught in whiteout conditions were taken to safety Tuesday after spending a night in a snow cave. They said they didn't make it to the summit of the 11,239-foot mountain as they planned Monday because bad weather closed in when they were at about 10,000 feet. "We thought we had a window in the weather, but we were wrong," said Justin Votos, 27. He and fellow climber Matthew Pitts, 28, are both from Portland. They said they set out to descend back toward Timberline Lodge - at 6,000 feet - where they had parked their vehicle, but they missed the lodge in the stormy weather. They dug a snow cave for shelter at what they estimated was about 5,000 feet.

Romney wins convincing Michigan victory

AP

Republican presidential hopeful, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney acknowledges his supporters at his primary election night rally, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008, in Southfield, Mich. At left is his wife Ann.

AMERICA VOTES

DETROIT (AP)—Mitt Romney scored his first major primary victory Tuesday, a desperately needed win in his native Michigan that gave his weakened presidential candidacy new life. It set the stage for a wide-open Republican showdown in South Carolina in just four days.

Three GOP candidates now have won in the first four states to vote in the 2008 primary season, roiling a nomination fight that lacks a clear favorite as the race moves south for the first time.

The former Massachusetts governor defeated John McCain, the Arizona senator who was hoping that independents and Democrats would join Republicans to help him repeat his 2000 triumph here. Mike Huckabee, the former Arkansas governor, trailed in third, and former Tennessee Sen. Fred Thompson is making a last stand in South Carolina.

"It's a victory of optimism over Washington-style pessimism," Romney said in an Associated Press telephone interview from Southfield, Mich., echoing his campaign speeches and taking a poke at McCain, the four-term senator he beat. "Now on to South Carolina, Nevada, Florida."

Minimizing the significance of Tuesday's vote, McCain said he had called Romney to congratulate him "that Michigan welcomed their native son with their support."

"Starting tomorrow, we're going to win South Carolina, and we're going to go on and win the nomination," McCain declared, also in an AP interview from Charleston, S.C.

Huckabee, too, already campaigning in the next primary state, predicted in Lexington, S.C., he would "put a flag in the ground here Saturday." He also jabbed at Romney, who has poured at least $20 million of his personal fortune into his bid: "We need to prove that electing a president is not just about how much money a candidate has."

In Michigan, with most precincts reporting, Romney had 39 percent of the vote, McCain had 30 percent and Huckabee 16 percent. No other Republican fared better than single digits.

Previously, Huckabee had won leadoff Iowa, and McCain had taken New Hampshire. Romney won scarcely contested Wyoming.

Hillary Rodham Clinton was the only top contender on the Democratic ballot Tuesday. With most precincts counted, she had 56 percent of the vote to 39 percent for uncommitted delegates to the Democratic National Convention.

Clinton, Obama vow to bury race debate

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Democratic presidential rivals Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama blamed aides and campaign surrogates Tuesday night for fueling a campaign controversy over race, jointly pledging at a debate on the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. to put the matter behind them. Obama said "not only in hindsight, but going forward," he regretted that his staff had prodded reporters to pursue the issue. "Our supporters, our staff, get overzealous. They start saying things that I would not say," added the most viable black candidate in history. "We both have exuberant and sometimes uncontrollable supporters," Clinton said in the opening moments of a two-hour roundtable debate televised on MSNBC. "We need to get this campaign where it should be," said the former first lady, seeking to become the first woman to occupy the White House.

McCain vows he'll win in South Carolina

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) -- Republican presidential candidate John McCain said on Thursday that despite his second-place finish in Michigan's GOP primary he intends to win this state's first-in-the-South contest. The Arizona senator told supporters he would prevail in the state that eight years ago derailed his candidacy. "Tonight, my friends, we congratulate another candidate's campaign but tomorrow we get up and fight," said the Arizona senator, who flew here late Tuesday evening to await the Michigan returns. After a victory in last week's New Hampshire primary, McCain had led in national polls. But the Michigan victory for former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney further scrambled the dynamics.

911 audio released of SF tiger attack

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—One of the men mauled in a tiger attack at the San Francisco Zoo pleaded for help from a 911 dispatcher and asked why it was taking so long to get it, according to a recording of the call released Tuesday. The dispatcher told the young man that paramedics could not come to his aid until they could be sure they weren't in danger of being attacked themselves, according to the recording.

Either Paul or Kulbir Dhaliwal made the 911 call from outside a zoo cafe. Judging by the synopsis of the attacks given by police, the older brother, Kulbir, who was the last of the three victims, likely made the call.

"It's a matter of life and death!" the young man shouts minutes into the Dec. 25 call.

"I understand that, but at the same time we have to make sure the paramedics don't get chewed out, because if the paramedics get hurt then nobody's going to help you," the dispatcher replies.

Seconds later, the brother shouts, "My brother's about to die out here!"

The 911 dispatcher tells him to calm down before the frustrated caller asks, "Can you fly a helicopter out here? Because I don't see a (expletive) ambulance."

By the time the call heard on the nearly seven-minute recording begins, the escaped Siberian tiger already had killed the Dhaliwals' friend, 17-year-old Carlos Sousa Jr., outside the animal's enclosure and was creeping closer to the cafe.

"At the cafe, we have the tiger!" an officer shouts into his radio just after 5:27 p.m., according to a recording of police dispatch traffic, about four minutes after the call between the brother and the 911 dispatcher ends. "We have the tiger attacking the victim!"

Less than a minute later, another call comes over the radio to stop shooting.

"We have the cat. We shot the cat," an officer says. "The victim is being attended to."

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

Gunmen kill priest in Philippines

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Gunmen barged into a Roman Catholic school in the southernmost Philippine province and fatally shot a priest who had received death threats from Muslim militants, church and police officials said Wednesday. About 10 masked gunmen seized Reynaldo Roda from his mission on remote Tawi-Tawi island on late Tuesday and shot him dead, said police Chief Superintendent Joel Goltiao. A teacher from the school also was abducted and computers stolen, he said. The attackers brought Roda to a speedboat about a kilometer (mile) from the school when a police team caught up with them and engaged them in a gunfight, Goltiao said.

Japan to release anti-whaling activists

SYDNEY, Australia (AP)—Australia said Wednesday that Japan has agreed to release two activists detained after going aboard a Japanese whaling ship near Antarctica, as whale hunters and defenders traded accusations of piracy. The Japanese whalers accused the activists of attacking their vessel with bottles of acid and illegally boarding the Yushin Maru No. 2 on Tuesday, and denied claims the men had been assaulted and tied up on deck. The anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd said the pair—Australian Benjamin Potts, 28, and Briton Giles Lane, 35—boarded the ship to deliver a letter demanding an end to the hunt, but had been roughed up and were being held against their will.

Snow, avalanches, kill 85 in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Heavy snow, avalanches and cold weather have killed at least 85 people in western Afghanistan in recent days, officials said Tuesday. In hardest hit Badghis province in the northwest, avalanches and continuing snowstorms have killed 60 people in the past four days, said Badghis Gov. Ashraf Nasiri. Ten people, including two children, have died due to bad weather in neighboring Ghor province, said provincial police chief Shah Jahan Noori. An avalanche killed five children in Herat province bordering Iran, and winter weather has been blamed for 10 deaths in Farah, another province on the border, said Abdul Mutalab, spokesman for the western regional police.

Nepal names airport for Hillary, Tenzing

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Nepal plans to name the only airport in the Mount Everest region after the first two men to reach the world's highest peak more than five decades ago, a government minister said Tuesday. Tourism Minister Prithvi Gurung said the government was planning to name the airport at Lukla as Tenzing-Hillary airport after Sir Edmund Hillary and his climbing partner, Tenzing Norgay, who scaled the 29,035-foot summit of Mount Everest on May 29, 1953. Lukla airport, situated at 9,100 feet, serves as the gateway for thousands of trekkers and mountaineers going to the Everest region.

Pakistan government warns on big rallies

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan's government urged opposition leaders Tuesday to refrain from holding rallies ahead of next month's elections, citing an escalating terrorist threat. The party of opposition leader Nawaz Sharif quickly rejected the recommendation, accusing officials of trying block its campaign against President Pervez Musharraf. The political squabble comes in the aftermath of the Dec. 27 assassination of Benazir Bhutto, whose Pakistan Peoples Party is expected by many to emerge as the largest in parliament after the Feb. 18 elections. Musharraf came under heavy criticism for alleged security lapses that allowed suspected Islamic militants to launch a gun and suicide bomb attack on former prime minister Bhutto as she left a campaign rally.

Bus bombing kills 23 in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—A bomb ripped through a packed civilian bus Wednesday, killing 23 people in southeastern Sri Lanka as the government officially withdrew from a tattered cease-fire with Tamil Tiger rebels.

The blast, the latest in a string of attacks in government-held territory in recent months, struck the bus in the remote town of Buttala, about 150 miles southeast of Colombo.

Doctors from Colombo were being flown to the area by emergency helicopters, government officials said.

It was unclear if the bomb was on the bus or planted by the roadside, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara. In addition to the 23 killed, 67 people were injured, he said.

Senior Superintendent Daya Samaraweera, a local police official, said the blast was caused by a roadside bomb and it was followed by a volley of gunshots fired at the bus.

The 8 a.m. explosion came just hours after the official end of the 2002 cease-fire agreement, which had largely broken down over the past two years amid renewed fighting.

Though scrapping the truce has little direct impact on the raging war, the Cabinet's unanimous decision to end the deal was criticized by peace mediators and foreign governments as a move that would make it even more difficult to end the decades-old conflict.

In the two weeks since the government told officials from Norway, a key broker of the deal, that it would end the cease-fire Wednesday, more than 300 people have been killed in violence along the front lines in the north, according to military figures.

The most immediate effect of the end of the cease-fire is the dissolution of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission, one of the few independent groups with access to both rebel-held territory and the government.

Thai market bombing wounds 39 civilians

YALA, Thailand (AP) -- Suspected Islamic militants bombed a busy market in southern Thailand on Tuesday, wounding more than three dozen civilians a day after a rebel ambush killed eight soldiers.

The attacks came as the separatist rebellion entered its fifth year and as Thailand prepared to bring in a new government.

Also Tuesday, the Cabinet renewed an emergency decree that gives security forces special powers of arrest in three southernmost provinces, government spokesman Chaiya Yimwilai said.

The insurgency in mostly Buddhist Thailand's Muslim-majority deep south has taken the lives of more than 2,800 people since flaring in January 2004.

Little progress has been made in curbing the violence despite the presence of nearly 40,000 police and soldiers in the region, as well as several changes of military leadership and strategy.

Many southern Muslims feel unfairly treated by the country's Buddhist majority, and their discontent has fueled separatist movements since Thailand annexed the area a century ago.

"During the past few months the situation seemed to quiet down, maybe because of heavy suppression by the government," said Muslim academic Vitaya Visetrat.

"The insurgents use the communist tactic of fighting the authorities based on the motto, 'When you come, I go hide; when you are not alert, I will strike,'" Vitaya said.

Tuesday's bombing at a market in the capital of Yala province wounded at least 39 people, six critically.

The bomb was hidden in a motorcycle and exploded shortly after a young Muslim man parked the vehicle, said police Col. Phumphet Phiphatphetphum.

US downgrades Philippine air safety

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has downgraded Philippine airline operations and put them under heightened scrutiny because of their inadequate safety standards, the U.S. Embassy said Tuesday.

The decision gives the Philippines a Category 2 rating along with countries such as Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Indonesia. It means Philippine carriers can continue flying to the U.S. but only "under heightened FAA surveillance," the embassy said in a statement.

The embassy also advised Americans flying to and from the Philippines to use carriers from countries whose civil aviation authorities meet international standards.

Only one of the country's carriers, Philippine Airlines, currently flies to the U.S. FAA rules stipulate that airlines from the Philippines cannot expand services to the United States under a Category 2 rating.

The FAA informed the Philippine government it has "serious concerns" about the oversight of Philippine air operations, which it said did not comply with International Civil Aviation Organization safety standards.

A spokesman for the Philippine Transport Department, Thompson Lantion, did not dispute the downgrade and said his department would conduct an in-house investigation to determine the shortcomings and fix them.

AP

A departing passenger undergoes manual and machine security checks during heightened security alert at the Manila International Airport Terminal 2 in Manila, Philippines in this Oct. 22, 2007 file photo.

Taliban plan to attack Kabul restaurants

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The Taliban said Tuesday that its suicide bombers would attack restaurants where Westerners eat in Kabul, an ominous new threat that forced American and European workers to restrict outings in the Afghan capital.

The country's intelligence chief linked Monday's deadly attack on the Serena Hotel—a well-guarded, high-profile property in Kabul frequented by Westerners—to a Pakistani militant. Afghan officials arrested four people, and said they included one of the three attackers, who was disguised in a police uniform for the assault.

The death toll in the bombing and shooting attack on the hotel rose to eight. An American, a Norwegian journalist and a Filipina who died of her wounds Tuesday were among those killed.

"We will target all these restaurants in Kabul where foreigners are eating," Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told The Associated Press by telephone. "We have jihadists in Kabul right now and soon we will carry out more attacks against military personnel and foreigners."

World

19 Gazans, kibbutz worker killed

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israeli troops killed a son of Gaza's most powerful leader along with 18 other Palestinians on Tuesday in the bloodiest day of fighting in the coastal area since Hamas militants seized control last summer.

As fighting raged in Gaza, a Hamas sniper shot and killed an Ecuadorean volunteer working in the potato fields of an Israeli border farm. That killing, and Tuesday's high death toll, stoked the flames of violence at a time when Israel and Palestinian moderates are making halting attempts to talk peace.

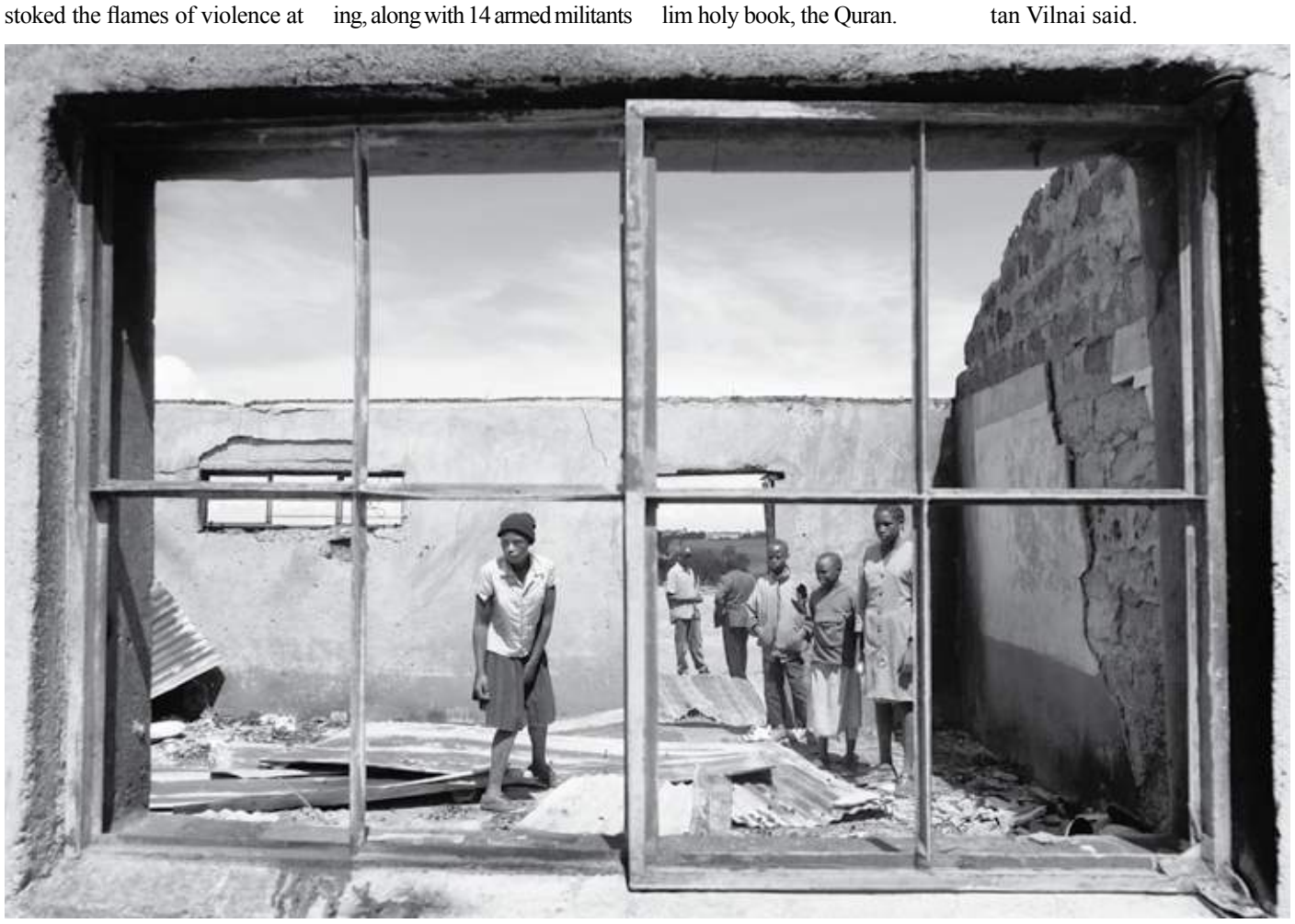
Tuesday's bloodshed began before dawn when Israeli infantry, tanks and helicopters pushed into northern Gaza in what the military said was a routine operation aimed at Palestinian militants who launch rocket barrages at Israeli towns near Gaza almost every day.

Three Palestinian civilians were killed in the ensuing fighting, along with 14 armed militants - one of them Hussam Zahar, 24, the son of hard-line Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar. The Israelis pulled out Tuesday with no casualties. A later airstrike on militants firing rockets into Israel killed two more Hamas men.

At the morgue at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, a weeping Mahmoud Zahar held his lifeless son's bloodied head in his hands and closed his eyes, then kissed him three times on the forehead and recited verses from the Muslim holy book, the Quran.

Zahar is widely seen as the most powerful Hamas official in Gaza and is thought to have masterminded the group's violent takeover of Gaza in June. Another of his sons was killed in 2003, when an Israeli F-16 dropped a bomb on his house in a failed attempt on the Hamas leader's life. Zahar has two surviving sons and four daughters.

Hussam Zahar was not targeted by the Israelis, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai said.



AP

Nellie Chepchumba, 13, left, inspects the remains of her school a day after Spring term was due to start, in the village of Ngarua, near Burnt Forest in Kenya, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008.

Genital mutilation a grisly weapon in Kenya

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—For two terrifying hours, the woman crouched inside her shop, watching as a gang attacked five men in the street, pulled down their trousers and sliced their genitals with rusty machetes.

"The men were screaming and saying, 'Please don't kill me, don't cut me,'" the 35-year-old vendor told The Associated Press, asking to be identified only by one initial, K., because she feared reprisals by the gang.

In the violence that has followed Kenya's disputed presidential election, a notorious gang has been mutilating the genitals of both men and women in the name of circumcision—inflicting a brutal punishment on members of a rival tribe that does not traditionally circumcise.

The attacks do not appear to be widespread, but they drive home how a fight touched off by opposition allegations that Kenya's president stole the election has exploded into a broader conflict fueled by ethnic resentments in what had been one of Africa's most stable nations.

Many of the mutilation victims belong to the Luo tribe of opposition presidential candidate Raila Odinga, say witnesses and even a recruiter for the gang itself.

The gang, called the Mungiki, draws mostly from President Mwai Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe, which has long dominated politics and business in this East African country.

Mungiki, which means "multitude" in Kikuyu, originally promoted traditional Kikuyu practices, including female genital mutilation. But in recent years it has become involved in extortion and murder and it also provides hired muscle for politicians.

The recruiter called forced "circumcisions" simple revenge on Luos for attacks on Kikuyus since the Dec. 27 election. More than 600 people have been reported killed in the upheaval.

"They must pay for the destruction and the deaths," the female recruiter said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the gang has been outlawed since 2002, after its members beheaded 21 people in a turf war with a rival gang.

Circumcision is a rite of passage for male members of the Kikuyu and most other Kenyan tribes, but the Luos do not practice it.

Millie Odhiambo-Mabona, a lawyer with a children's rights group who reported hearing of numerous such attacks, said mutilation is a "weapon of war" for groups that practice traditional circumcision.

"Because for the communities that don't practice circumcision, if you forcefully circumcise them, then it's meant to be degrading," she said from Nairobi in a telephone interview with the AP in New York.

The number of mutilations appears to be relatively small, measured against the violence that has wracked Kenya.

K., interviewed in the Nairobi slum of Kibera, reported seeing five men harmed in this way, including at least two whose penises were cut off and thrown into a fire. She said she believed those men died because she saw the attackers throw the bodies behind some kiosks.

The Mungiki recruiter confirmed three other "forced circumcisions."

A surgeon at Kenyatta National Hospital, the main government hospital in the capital, said he had operated on two men with injuries to their penises, at least one of whom was a Luo.

"There were cuts around the foreskin, probably an attempt at circumcision," the doctor said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A mortuary assistant in Nairobi said out of 78 bodies brought to his facility since the fighting started, two adult males appeared to have been crudely circumcised before being hacked to death. The assistant insisted on speaking anonymously out of fear of reprisals.

'Freedom declined last year in 1 in 5 countries

WASHINGTON (AP)—Freedom declined significantly in 2007 in almost four times as many countries as registered improvements in 2007 as the world was less free for a second consecutive year, according to a survey by a private democracy watchdog organization. as 36 percent of the people in the world—about half of them in China—were not living in freedom

In all, 36 percent of the people in the world, about half of them in China, were not living in freedom, the New York-based Freedom House reported. While the number of countries judged not free declined by two to 43 last year, "There were many and overwhelmingly negative changes within countries already designated not free," the survey found.

The number of countries judged free stood at 90, representing 47 percent of the world's 193 countries, and those considered partly free stood at 60, or 31 percent.

Those found not free accounted for nearly 2.4 billion people, about half in China.

Expectations of government concessions on human rights or modest democratic reforms in advance of the 2008 Summer Olympics did not pan out in China, where the government continued to crack down on political activists, Internet journalists and human rights lawyers, the report said.

Reversals in freedom were seen in one-fifth of the world's countries, including Pakistan, Kenya, Egypt, Nigeria and Venezuela. One country, Mauritania, joined the list of democracies, while three, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Kenya, dropped off it.

Two countries, Thailand and Togo, were upgraded from not free to partly free.

South Asia, the former Soviet Union and the Middle East did particularly poorly, giving "an alarming signal about the development of freedom worldwide, something formerly viewed as inevitable," said Jennifer Windsor, executive director of Freedom House.

WORLD BRIEFS

Castro looks frail, alert in new photos

HAVANA (AP)—Fidel Castro looked frail but alert and even playful in a series of official photographs taken during a meeting with Brazil's president on Tuesday, the first images of the ailing Cuban leader released in about three months. Wearing a tracksuit and tennis shoes that have become his trademark since he fell ill, Castro is seen seated and grinning, his beard well-trimmed and his hair combed as he talks with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. In some images, he is seen pretending to snap pictures with a small camera. Taken in an undisclosed location, the photographs were given to reporters as Silva left Cuba, concluding a 24-hour visit.

Bomb hits US vehicle in Beirut

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP)—A bomb hidden on a Beirut highway hit a U.S. Embassy vehicle Tuesday, killing at least three Lebanese bystanders in the first attack in years targeting American diplomatic interests in the country. The car's Lebanese driver and an American at a nearby school were among five people injured. The blast, just before a farewell reception for the U.S. ambassador in downtown Beirut, came at a time when political tensions are high in Lebanon, with the U.S.-backed government and Syrian-backed opposition deadlocked over choosing a new president.

Opposition figure heads Kenya parliament

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Legislators chose an opposition member as parliament speaker in a close vote Tuesday, giving a victory to foes of Kenya's president as they prepared for mass protest rallies that raised fears of new violence over last month's disputed election. Soldiers stood guard outside the National Assembly, and security forces were expected to be out in force Wednesday to guard against unrest with the start of three days of demonstrations against President Mwai Kibaki. The legislative session was the first time that Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga were together since Odinga accused Kibaki of rigging the Dec. 27 presidential ballot.

Rice hails political progress in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP)—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice brought Iraq's leader a double-edged message Tuesday: praise for progress toward ending the nation's sectarian rifts, but also a warning not to squander the momentum after many false starts on reconciliation. The meeting with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki underscored Washington's push for faster and bolder efforts to heal differences between the Shiite-led government and Iraq's other main groups—Sunni Arabs who were sidelined by the fall of Saddam Hussein and Kurds enjoying an economic boom in their near-autonomous enclave.

Environment

Coral reef initiative summer internship opportunities

Several paid internships in marine resource management will be available to college students over the summer of 2008.

Interns will be placed at the Division of Environmental Quality, the Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the Coastal Resources Management Office on Saipan, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Salary will be $7 per hour for approximately 25 hours per week. Interns will be responsible for providing their own housing and transportation.

Preference will be given to students with a long-term interest in working in the CNMI. Interns will develop and complete a project in addition to participating in ongoing activities at the host agency.

Available positions include:

Education & Outreach
CRM – 1 position available
The intern would work with Coral Reef Education Coordinator in the implementation of the CNMI's Rare Pride campaign, which will be running in full force by the summer of 2008.

Pride campaigns build momentum for conservation by inspiring enthusiasm and commitment in those with the most at stake: local communities and individuals who live in the earth's most ecologically valuable regions. The campaign will include face-to-face outreach and education, event planning and facilitating, media coordination, material design, production, and dispersal, in addition to many other fun and exciting CNMI-wide activities. The intern will be expected to assist in all facets of the campaign.

DEQ – 1 position available
The education& outreach intern at DEQ shall conduct door-to-door outreach to select villages on Saipan and perform weekly reading sessions at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. The door-to-door outreach activity shall consist of a coral reef survey by the resident/s, coral reef protection 'tips' and distribution of the coral reef 'goody bag.' The intern shall record all responses to survey and report findings in the written report and present info during presentation. The intern will be expected to assist in the pride campaign with CRM interns and staff.

DEQ – 1 position available
Position description will be available soon.

Marine Monitoring
CRM – 2 positions available
DEQ – 1 position available
The monitoring program seeks to understand the environmental trends in CNMI's marine environments. The program secondarily tries to identify the causes of those trends. Both of these information gathering activities are used to support responsible management of local marine environments and resources.

Interns will be involved with all aspects of the monitoring program, including, but not limited to data collection, education and outreach and data management. Interns will develop, complete and present an original research project under the supervision of the CRM Biologist. Interns should be familiar with standard word processing and spreadsheet programs (e.g MS Word, Excel, etc.); and be able to swim/snorkel without assistance.

Fisheries
DFW – 1 position available
The intern will work with the DFW-Fisheries Checklist, a comprehensive data management tool cataloging observed fish species within the CNMI. The Checklist is a primary resource for documenting health and diversity of our coral reef systems. Applicants must be proficient with Excel™ and would preferably have some experience identifying or working with fish.

The second set of duties revolves around maintaining and advancing the status of the DFW-Fisheries website. We would like to add an interactive element to the DFW-Fisheries website which allows the public to comment on observations they have while fishing or using the reefs and allows the DFW staff to answer questions. We want the web to become our primary outreach and public interaction tool. Superior applicants would have experience with DreamWeaver™ or some other web development programs and an understanding of interactive web systems.

Finally, the intern will also have a chance to accompany DFW staff on surveys, sample collections and other field projects. Thus, an ideal candidate would also have some boating, fishing, snorkeling or diving experience and be safety conscious and detail oriented.

Marine Protected Area
DFW – 1 position available
Intern will be involved with all aspects of the Marine Protected Area program, which includes collecting data from fishermen and community members regarding their awareness of MPA's. Intern will also develop a poster highlighting the importance of MPA's for elementary aged school children. Intern will conduct education and outreach via information booths in various areas around the island (super markets, docks/piers). Intern should be familiar with standard word processing and spreadsheet programs (e.g MS Word, Excel, etc.) and must be willing to work flexible shift to include some evening/weekend hours.

Interested students should submit:

1. completed CNMI Employment Application
2. letter of recommendation either from a professor or an employer,
3. resume,
4. transcript (unofficial is acceptable) and
5. statement of interest (also known as a cover letter), stating desired position(s).

Deadline: March 28, 2008. Materials can be emailed to reinacamacho@deq.gov.mp, or mailed or faxed to:

Division of Environmental Quality
Attn: Reina Camacho
P O Box 501304 Saipan, MP 96950
Fax: (670) 664-8540

The internship shall take place June through August, but actual dates and hours worked will vary according to availability. For more information, contact Reina Camacho at (670) 664-8522. ***(CoCo)***

Coral reef symposium, proclamation on Friday

2008 is the International Year of the Reef and tomorrow, Jan. 18, 2008, Gov. Benigno Fitial and Lt. Gov. Tim Villagomez shall proclaim 2008 as the CNMI Year of the Reef.

International Year of the Reef 2008 is a worldwide campaign to:

- Raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and threats to their sustainability, AND
- To motivate people to take action to protect them, AND
- All individuals, corporations, schools, governments, and organizations are welcome and actively encouraged to participate in IYOR 2008.

Community involvement, stewardship, and fun are integral elements of this momentous occasion.

We'd like to encourage you to show your commitment to environmental conservation and attend the IYOR symposium on Jan. 18, 2008 at the Sandcastle of Hyatt Regency from 8am until 12pm.

The symposium shall begin with the proclamation signing, followed by the CNMI State of the Reef Report and testimonials from our community.

There will also be exhibitions from several natural resource and coral reef management organizations. ***(CoCo)***

In Loving Memory Of
a Beautiful and Gracious Daughter

Catricia Jawn Fernandez Cepeda

Fondly known as "CJ" or "Sage"
December 27, 1990 – January 8, 2008
was called to her eternal rest in ***Lichtenau, Germany on January 8, 2008.***

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Parents:
John Patrick Villagomez Cepeda and
Cande Mercedes Fernandez Cepeda

Brothers:
Shawn Patrick, Zohn Manet, and Ian Edwin Cepeda

Paternal Grandparents:
Juan B. and Patricia V. Cepeda

Maternal Grandparent:
Kathleen Veenstra

Great Grandparents:
Paulina B. Cepeda
Manuel S. Villagomez

Uncles/Aunts:
Chris & Dee Cepeda (David, Patti, Chris Jr.), LA
James & Cheryl Cepeda (Becca), KY
Paulina Cepeda & Eldred Shai (Noelani), SPN
Stephen Fernandez, TX
Roque & Alice Fernandez (Warren, Brandon, Chanelle), AZ

In her new life, she joins:
Her Grandfather:
†Ignacio Q. Fernandez

Her Great-Grandparents:
†Joaquin D. Cepeda
†Luise P. Villagomez
†Mercedes Q. Fernandez
†Roque Q. Fernandez
†Edwin Stringfield
†Doris Stringfield (step)
†Josephine Kilmeyer

Catricia will be missed by numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, and nephews.

Daily mass is being offered at Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 6:00 a.m. Nightly rosary is being prayed at the Villagomez Family Santa Cruz Chapel in Fina Sisu at 7:00 p.m.

Her remains will be escorted from the Borja's Funeral Home to Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 19, 2008. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11:00 a.m. followed by interment at Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Chalan Kanoa.

Please join us in prayers.
Thank You and *Si Yu'us Ma'ase*

John and Cande Cepeda and Family

Life & Style

AP

Brad Renfro attends the New York Premiere for Alfie, held at the Ziegfeld Theatre, in this Oct. 18, 2004, file photo in New York.

Troubled actor Brad Renfro dies at 25

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Actor Brad Renfro, whose career began promisingly with a childhood role in "The Client" but rapidly faded as he struggled with drugs and alcohol, was found dead Tuesday in his home. He was 25.

Paramedics pronounced him dead at 9 a.m., said Craig Harvey, chief investigator for the Los Angeles County coroner's office. The cause of death was not immediately determined, Harvey said, but an autopsy could be conducted as early as Wednesday.

Renfro had reportedly been drinking with friends the evening before his death, Harvey said.

Renfro's lawyer, Richard Kaplan, said he did not know whether the death was connected to any problems with addiction.

"He was working hard on his sobriety," Kaplan said. "He was doing well. He was a nice person."

Renfro recently completed a role in "The Informers," a film adaptation of a Bret Easton Ellis novel that stars Winona Ryder, Brandon Routh and Billy Bob Thornton.

"Brad was an exceptionally talented young actor and our time spent with him was thoroughly enjoyable," Marco Weber, president of the film's production house, Senator Entertainment, said in a statement.

The actor served 10 days in jail in May 2006 after pleading no contest to driving while intoxicated and guilty to attempted possession of heroin.

The latter charge stemmed from his arrest in Los Angeles' Skid Row area, when he attempted to buy heroin from an undercover officer in 2005.

For several years he was better known for that drug bust and the resulting criminal case than for acting.

After one court appearance, he talked to reporters about drug rehabilitation, saying he was "tired of paying the consequences" for drinking and drug use and eager to get clean.

"It's definitely been an eye-opener," he said of his rehabilitation program.

Other run-ins with the law included a 1998 charge of cocaine and marijuana possession, for which he avoided jail time in a plea deal. He was also placed on probation in January 2001 and ordered to pay $4,000 for repairs to a 45-foot yacht he and a friend tried to steal in Florida in August 2000.

He was arrested again in May 2001 and charged with underage drinking, violating the terms of his probation, and was ordered into alcohol rehabilitation the following March.

A native of Knoxville, Tenn., Renfro's film career began when he was 12, acting opposite Susan Sarandon and Tommy Lee Jones in "The Client." His other credits included "Sleepers," "Deuces Wild," "Apt Pupil" and "The Jacket."

Coroner: Di butler's secret not a secret

LONDON (AP) -- Princess Diana's butler said Tuesday that the secret he couldn't remember a day earlier is that Diana was planning to move to the United States, or was it South Africa? He wasn't sure.

In his second day of testimony at the inquest into Diana's death, Paul Burrell also said he was unsure whether her letter referring to the secret - "What a secret!" she wrote - was written shortly before she died, as he said in his book, or a year earlier.

"Yesterday was a very confusing day," Burrell said, going on to describe his experience at the inquest as "ghastly" and "horrid."

On Monday, he had first refused to disclose the secret, then said it might have been one of many secrets, and then that he didn't remember what it was.

His latest answer came in a letter to the coroner, Lord Justice Scott Baker, who told the jury that "it doesn't seem to me that they are actually secrets at all."

"One of them, indeed, appears in your book, 'The Way We Were,'" he told Burrell.

The man who was Diana's butler and confidant for a decade returned to court after going to his home in northwest England overnight, at the court's request, to retrieve documents that he had used in preparing two books. Baker examined them and ruled that they contained nothing relevant to the inquiry into the deaths of Diana and boyfriend Dodi Fayed on Aug. 31, 1997.

Burrell later said he shared Diana's fears of sinister forces, and her distrust of the royal family and the police. However, he said Monday he did not share Mohamed Al Fayed's belief that his son and the princess were victims of a conspiracy directed by Prince Philip, the husband of Queen Elizabeth II.

Michael Mansfield, a lawyer representing Al Fayed, questioned Burrell about his evasive earlier statements about the secret.

Speaking of the inquest, Burrell said: "I thought it would be easier than it is; quite frankly it's been horrid. It's been a disgrace actually."

How could he said that, Mansfield asked, when Burrell's expressed reason for disclosing a note about Diana's fears in 2003 was to trigger an inquest.

Researchers identify model for Mona Lisa

BERLIN (AP)—A researcher has uncovered evidence that apparently confirms the identity of the woman behind the Mona Lisa's iconic smile, Germany's University of Heidelberg says.

She is Lisa del Giocondo, wife of Florentine businessman Francesco del Giocondo, according to notes written in the margins of a book by a friend of Leonardo da Vinci as the artist worked on the masterpiece, the school said in a statement Monday.

The discovery by a Heidelberg University library manuscript expert appears to confirm what has long been suspected. It is also an answer that has been in plain view for centuries: the Mona Lisa is known as La Gioconda in Italian.

Del Giocondo was first named as the likeness in the painting by Italian writer Giorgio Vasari in 1550, who also dated the work at between 1503 and 1506, the university said.

But because Vasari relied on anecdotal evidence, there was always doubts about the identification, and Leonardo is not known to have made any notes about the model's identity himself.

AP

A man takes a photograph of Leonardo da Vinci's 16th century masterpiece the "Mona Lisa" painting, kept behind a protective glass, in the Louvre museum in Paris in a Monday April 26, 2004 file photo.

Compounding the mystery, vague references in 1517, 1525 and 1540 point to other identifications.

"One possibility discussed is the presentation of a fictitious likeness of a woman; Leonardo's female ideal," the school said.

But the find by Heidelberg library expert Armin Schlechter settles the matter, according to the university.

In a copy of the works of Roman philosopher Cicero, a Florentine official and friend of Leonardo's wrote in the margins that da Vinci was working on a portrait of Lisa del Giocondo. The friend, Agostino Vespucci, dated his notes October 1503, also helping to pin down the exact time Leonardo was working on the painting.

"All doubts as to the identity of the Mona Lisa are eliminated (by) one source," the university said.

The discovery was actually made in 2005, but was not widely known until a German radio station last week aired it in a report.

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

We, the family of the late

†Adam Quitugua Emul

wish to invite our family and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the first year death anniversary of our beloved Adam.

Daily Mass will be offered at 6:00 p.m. at Santa Remedios Church, Tanapag Village, beginning on Monday, January 21, 2008. On the final day, Tuesday, January 29, 2008, Mass will be offered at 6:00 p.m. at Santa Remedios, Tanapag Village with dinner to follow immediately after the Mass.

Dankulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

Angie S. Quitugua & Family

Oprah Winfrey getting her own TV network

By DAVID BAUDER
AP TELEVISION WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Oprah Winfrey is getting her own TV network. OWN—for Oprah Winfrey Network—will debut next year in nearly 70 million homes with cable and satellite, part of a deal announced Tuesday with Discovery Communications. It will replace the Discovery Health network.

The announcement builds a media empire that already includes the top-rated TV talk show, a magazine, a satellite radio network, a Web site and TV movies made under her banner.

"This is an evolution of what I've been able to do every day," Winfrey said. "I will now have the opportunity to do this 24 hours a day on a platform that goes on forever."

She will be chairwoman of the network, owned 50-50 by Discovery and her company, Harpo Productions Inc. In return for taking over a network already operated by Discovery, Winfrey gives half ownership of the Oprah.com Web site.

Discovery owns 13 networks in the United States, including Discovery, TLC and Animal Planet. Discovery Health is one of the least successful, and company President and CEO David Zaslav was looking for ideas about what to do with it when his wife handed him a copy of Oprah's magazine.

He approached Winfrey about a partnership, coincidentally shortly after she had come upon an entry for her diary dated May 24, 1992, when she wrote about her idea for creating her own network.

"David came and really spoke about the vision I'd been having for 15 years," she said. "It felt like, `I can't believe you're saying this.'"

Zaslav said that Discovery's core mission is knowledge and curiosity and "this is right in our sweet spot."

Winfrey envisions the programming dealing with issues such as money, health, weight, relationships and raising children. Some of the stable of in-house experts she uses on "Oprah" and the XM satellite radio station might be expected to contribute.

While Winfrey will be the face of the new network, she won't have much of a presence, at least at first. She is under contract to continue on "Oprah" through May 2011, a deal that prohibits the use of reruns on her own network.

After that, she could continue her show on broadcast TV or do it for the cable network, and may reach a deal to allow reruns on OWN. Taking "Oprah" off broadcast TV, however, could reduce its visibility and in turn make the cable network less valuable.

Winfrey said she needed to decide this fall whether to continue her syndicated show beyond 2011.

Winfrey was an early and visible investor in the development of Oxygen, a network for women that was created in the 1990s. She said she quickly determined that Oxygen "did not reflect my voice" and she removed herself from the company's board after a few meetings.

AP

A photo released by Harpo Productions Inc., shows talk-show host Oprah Winfrey and David Zaslav, president and chief executive of Discovery Communications after announcing Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008, in Chicago the formation of a new joint venture "OWN: The Oprah Winfrey Network."

Ruling against Spears remains in effect

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A court commissioner has decided to keep in effect an order suspending Britney Spears' right to visit her two sons and keeping them in the custody of ex-husband Kevin Federline.

The ruling by Superior Court Commissioner Scott Gordon came Monday after a full day of closed-door testimony on a bizarre situation this month in which police had Spears taken to a hospital after a standoff in her home when she refused to return the children to Federline's bodyguard after a visit.

The commissioner's written order noted that Federline was among the day's witnesses.

Gordon scheduled another hearing for Feb. 19.

Spears went to the courthouse briefly during the afternoon but never went inside, and she left amid a swarm of paparazzi.

The hearing in family law court was held behind closed doors after reporters were ordered to leave.

Court spokesman Allan Parachini said those who testified were two Los Angeles police officers; Paula Strong, the court-appointed monitor who was present for the visit at Spears' home; Lisa Hacker, a parenting coach who has been working with Spears and Federline; and Lonnie Jones, the bodyguard who went to the home to get the children.

Parachini didn't reveal what the witnesses said during their testimony. Gordon's order noted that during an officer's testimony there were two exhibits, one described as a photocopy of a police report and the other as a "photocopy of Application for 72-hour Detention for Evaluation and Treatment." All exhibits were ordered sealed.

Federline's attorney, Mark Vincent Kaplan, told reporters that after hearing all the testimony the commissioner decided to leave his Jan. 4 emergency order in place.

"The word victory is not something Mr. Federline or his counsel would ascribe to this. There is no joy. This is a grave situation for all," Kaplan said.

Although Federline thought the ruling was correct, Kaplan said, "his goal, his hope for the future is at some point he will be able to parent the children with the participation of their mother."

Kaplan would not answer questions.

Neither Spears, 26, nor Federline, 29, were required to attend, but Federline arrived early, sporting a mohawk-style haircut and dressed in a suit.

Spears didn't arrive until early afternoon.

A sport utility vehicle took her into a civic center garage, but only her attorneys got out before the vehicle left. It later stopped outside the courthouse, where Spears got out of a passenger seat and took over the driver's seat. It wasn't clear in the crush of photographers whether she or a companion was at the wheel when it left.

Grammys seek use of striking writers

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Producers of the Grammy Awards have requested an interim agreement that would allow striking Hollywood writers to work on next month's telecast, The Recording Academy said Tuesday.

Writers Guild of America spokesman Gregg Mitchell said the request was referred to the board of the union's West Coast branch for a decision. He said earlier in the day, however, that a deal "is unlikely to be granted."

The situation raised question about the fate of the Feb. 10 Grammys ceremony, set for live broadcast by CBS.

The writers guild refused to grant a waiver for last weekend's Golden Globe Awards and threatened to picket that event. Actors were advised by their union to stay away from the ceremony, prompting Globes organizers to replace the normally glitzy telecast with a scaled-down news conference lacking stars, glamour and ad revenue.

Next month's Academy Awards could face the same fate.

The Recording Academy said it remained hopeful that there would be a quick and positive response to its request involving the 50th annual Grammy Awards show.

"We will take whatever action is necessary to ensure that a program so vital to our industry, artists, charitable beneficiaries, and the great city of Los Angeles is held as planned," said the statement by Neil Portnow, president and chief executive of The Recording Academy, which owns all rights to the Grammy telecast but does not produce the show.

The academy said it supports efforts by Cossette Productions, which produces the Grammys, to reach an interim agreement with writers such as the one previously made with Worldwide Pants, which makes David Letterman's late-night show.

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First Sunday
Friday 4:30 7:05 9:55
Saturday 1:30 4:30 7:05 9:55
Sunday 1:30 4:30 7:05
Mon thru Thurs 4:30 7:05
Ice Cube, Regina Hall
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13
Synopsis
Durell and LeeJohn are best friends and bumbling petty criminals. When Durell learns that his ex-girlfriend plans to move to another state with their son–unless they can get her $17,000 to pay off a debt–they come up with a desperate scheme to rob their neighborhood church. But when the duo fumbles their way through the break-in, they discover someone has beaten them to the punch.

The Bucket List
Friday 4:10 7:15 9:30
Saturday 1:20 4:10 7:15 9:30
Sunday 1:20 4:10 7:15
Mon thru Thurs 4:10 7:15
Jack Nicholson, Morgan Freeman
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13
Synopsis
A long time ago, Carter Chambers' philosophy professor suggested that his students compose a "bucket list," a collection of all the things they wanted to do, see and experience in life before they kicked the bucket. But while Carter was trying to define his private dreams and plans, reality intruded.

★ ★ ★

One Missed Call
Friday 4:25 7:25 9:40
Saturday 1:25 4:25 7:25 9:40
Sunday 1:25 4:25 7:25
Mon thru Thurs 4:25 7:25
Edward Burns, Shannyn Sossamon
Horror, Remake • Rated PG13
Synopsis
Beth Raymond is traumatized when she witnesses the gruesome deaths of two friends just days apart. Even more disturbing, she knows that both of them had received chilling cell phone messages—actual recordings of their own horrifying last moments. Impossibly, the calls were received days before they died, but each death occurred precisely when and how the messages foretold.

National Treasure: Book of Secrets
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:45
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon thru Thurs 4:00 7:00
Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger
Action, Adventure • Rated PG

The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep
Friday 4:20 7:30 9:50
Saturday 1:15 4:20 7:30 9:50
Sunday 1:15 4:20 7:30
Mon thru Thurs 4:20 7:30
Emily Watson, Ben Chaplin
Family, Adventure • Rated PG

I Am Legend
Friday 4:15 7:20 10:00
Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:20 10:00
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:20
Mon thru Thurs 4:15 7:20
Will Smith, Alice Braga
Action, Sci-Fi, Adventure • Rated PG13

Alvin & The Chipmunks
Friday 4:05 7:10 9:35
Saturday 1:05 4:05 7:10 9:35
Sunday 1:05 4:05 7:10
Mon thru Thurs 4:05 7:10
Jason Lee, Cameron Richardson
Comedy, Family • Rated PG

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'American Idol' returning for season 7

By ERIN CARLSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—"American Idol," for all its success, is not above tinkering—especially after last year's revolving door of celebrity mentors and Sanjaya Malakar's improbable run.

Not TOO much tinkering, though. Why mess with a trusty formula?

The Fox ratings superpower returns for its seventh season on Tuesday, and will doubtless dominate January through May as it did last year and the year before that. It could even attract a bigger audience in 2008, thanks to the Hollywood writers strike.

But Nigel Lythgoe, an executive producer for the show, downplayed speculation that the lack of alternative programming as a result of the strike could equal more viewers for "Idol."

"Everyone is sort of saying that there isn't anything else on television to watch," Lythgoe told The Associated Press.

But the other networks are so intimidated by the most-watched show on American television that "they don't really schedule anything around 'Idol' anyway," he added.

"American Idol" has reached a plateau in the ratings, down only 1 percent from 2006 (30.7 million average viewers) to 2007 (30.4 million). The finale with winner Jordin Sparks was seen by 31.2 million, according to Nielsen Media Research.

That fell below the 2006 season-ender, which drew 36.6 million viewers watching Taylor Hicks claim the title in an unpredictable matchup with Katharine McPhee.

Lythgoe acknowledged that the show suffered last year when finalists failed to top the excitement and star quality of performers from previous seasons; on the other hand, he said producers erred by giving too much air time to famous mentors like Jennifer Lopez with individual projects to promote rather than delving deep into contestants' back stories to foster a stronger connection with viewers.

"We felt as though we made mistakes last year with not really pushing and introducing the talent as well as we have done in the past," he said. "In the past, we knew about (season five also-ran) Kellie Pickler. We knew about her dad going to prison. We knew about her mom leaving (the country singer when she was a toddler)."

(Blake Lewis, we hardly knew ye.)

This time around, the show will redirect attention to the finalists and bring back alums such as McPhee and season-two winner Ruben Studdard during results shows to keep fans abreast of what they're up to, Lythgoe said. There will be a new set to spice up a tried-and-true format.

"The most important thing is the show has got to look better," Simon Cowell said during a recent telephone news conference. "It's got to be more fun as a show, and if it is, I think more people will watch. I think it absolutely comes down to the content of what we provide the viewers."

The new season kicks off with two-hour episodes airing 8-10 p.m. EST Tuesday and Wednesday and featuring auditions in Philadelphia and Dallas, respectively. Another tweak: "Idol" wannabes were allowed to play instruments during tryouts.

Of course, the voice is what matters most—and charisma, the reason why the vocally challenged Sanjayas of the world advance further than they otherwise should.

Of course, charisma doesn't always translate to commercial success after the contest crowns its final winner.

Hicks, Studdard and McPhee have lost record deals with Sony-BMG, which automatically signs the show's singers. Hicks' self-titled, post-"Idol" album has sold a respectable 699,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, but it did not reach the 1 million mark surpassed by debuts from previous "Idol" champs. Studdard's previous album, 2006's "The Return," has sold only 236,000 copies.

Sparks' freshman disc has sold 425,000 units since its November release, and has spawned a hit single with "Tattoo."

Meanwhile, multiplatinum "Idol" veterans such as Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood and Chris Daughtry—who laughed all the way to the top of the charts after finishing fourth to Hicks—can be heard on the radio at any given moment of the day.

Cowell said the lackluster sales by Hicks and Studdard reflect the unpredictability of the record industry. Lythgoe said they have nothing to do with success of the program itself.

"I don't think we should ever confuse the record-buying market with the television-viewing market," Lythgoe said. "And just because the records aren't selling doesn't mean to say that 'American Idol' the television program is now going to slip from the ratings."

Daughtry, who has sold 3.6 million copies of his debut album, disagrees.

"It's in a state of decline and if they don't do something about it, it's probably not gonna last too much longer," he said in an interview posted Monday on Rolling Stone magazine's Web site.

Though the stretched-out audition process, with its terrible singers, deliver excellent ratings, Daughtry said he wished the show would give more screen time to people with talent.

"It's funny at first, but come on," he said. "They spend three weeks on people that can't sing, and that's what they're banking it on. (They should) find some people that you can really invest in."

At least one loyal fan thinks the cultural phenomenon loses some of its magic when winners don't live up to the "Idol" title.

"The TV show—in order to remain exciting to us as viewers—does have to produce hits, does have to produce winners," said Michael Slezak, who blogs about the show for Entertainment Weekly magazine's Web site. "Because if nothing is at stake then it becomes just another reality show. You know, 'America's Top Model,' they are not actually producing America's top model."

AP

In this photo released by Fox,Television's biggest event, "America Idol", returns for its seventh season in a special two-night, four-hour season premiere Tuesday, Jan. 15 and Wednesday, Jan. 16 on FOX. Pictured L-R: Randy Jackson, Ryan Seacrest, Simon Cowell and Paula Abdul.

Matthew McConaughey is going to be a daddy

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Matthew McConaughey is going to be a dad. The actor and his girlfriend, Brazilian model Camila Alves, are expecting a baby, publicist Alan Nierob said Tuesday.

McConaughey made the announcement on his Web site.

"Got some blessed news ... a celebration of life and bounty ... a newborn concieved (sic) ... yes, my girlfriend Camila and I made a baby together," McConaughey wrote.

Alves, who is three months along, is doing well, the actor wrote.

"We are stoked and wowed by this miracle of creation and this gift from God, and so excited for the adventure that will come in raising this child, being a mother and a father," he said.

McConaughey goes on to say, "Wish us the best, keep us in your prayers, and God bless evolution."

McConaughey, a Texas native, has appeared in films including "The Wedding Planner" and "Sahara" and was named People magazine's "Sexiest Man Alive" in 2005.

His latest film, "Fool's Gold," is to be released next month.

Actor Matthew McConaughey and girlfriend Camilla Alves attend a private dinner hosted by Domenico Dolce & Stefano Gabbana in this Dec. 2007 file photo in New York. AP

Both mother and daughter are grieving for their dads

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I feel like I'm all alone. My daughter's father was recently murdered, and I can't seem to get over it. Even though we hadn't been close for months before his passing, he was all I have known since I was 13. I'm trying to move on, but it's so hard.

I don't know how to help my daughter with her issues because I'm still grieving for my own father, who was killed in Baghdad several years ago.

Am I a bad mother for not talking to her enough about it? Frankly, I try to avoid the subject every chance I get. But it's eating me up inside, and I can't stop crying.

How will I ever move on to another relationship when I can't even get past the last one? How can I help my child when I feel like I can't even help myself?

—DESPERATE FOR HELP IN NEW YORK

DEAR DESPERATE FOR HELP: Please accept my deepest sympathy for the double loss in your life—the death of your father and the tragedy that befell your daughter's father. If you are going to heal yourself and your girl, it is imperative that you find help for both of you. She needs to talk about her feelings so she can deal with them—and so do you. Avoiding the subject, painful as it is, doesn't work, as you are finding out.

I recommend that you find a grief-support group for you and for your daughter, a safe place in which to share your feelings of loss, pain and possibly anger. An excellent place to start would be to ask your clergyperson. Please don't put it off because help is available.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm 25 and my boyfriend, "Dave," is 32. I love him dearly. He's my best friend, and I know we cherish each other, but I always feel like I'm No. 2, 3 or 4 in his life.

Dave has a 4-year-old son and is occupied with the boy three nights a week. On those nights I am not welcome. There are no phone calls, and I feel alienated and lonely. Also, he stays in a job he claims he hates because he can't afford to miss one payment to his estranged wife.

Dave refuses to get a divorce because it's expensive, and he is afraid that she will abuse him financially. Yet he gives her extra money on a regular basis despite his 50/50 custody (at present), and he's often broke because of some demand or another she had made. She has a great job as a nurse, but I know very little about her situation so I can't judge her.

I am frustrated. When I try to discuss it, Dave tells me he's sorry, "things will change" and eventually I'll be able to share his life with him and his son. But it's been more than a year, and nothing has changed. Should I hold on? This is driving me crazy.

—LOSING PATIENCE IN CONNECTICUT

DEAR LOSING PATIENCE: Your boyfriend appears to be a conscientious parent, but he is married and not available for what you want. He may be satisfied with the status quo, which is why he has made no move to divorce or to further include you.

Dave is not your "best friend." Best friends discuss their problems and work out compromises. Please consider moving on, because if you allow this situation to drag on another year or two or three—and I suspect it will—you'd have to be crazy.

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

AND THIS IS MY ROOM, UNCLE MAX. I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'RE SLEEPING, BUT IT SURE ISN'T HERE.
GOTCHA. NICE ROOM.
THIS IS HOBBES. I WOULDN'T GET TOO CLOSE IF I WAS YOU.
DON'T WORRY. HE LOOKS LIKE A FIERCE ONE.
YEP. MANDIBLES OF DEATH, THAT'S WHAT HE'S GOT.
... AND A KILLER'S EYE. YOU CAN TELL. I... I THINK I'LL GO DOWNSTAIRS.
OL' UNCLE MAX SEEMS PRETTY SHARP. HARD TO BELIEVE HE'S RELATED TO DAD.
"A KILLER'S EYE," HE SAID! WOW! I WONDER WHICH ONE!
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1/17

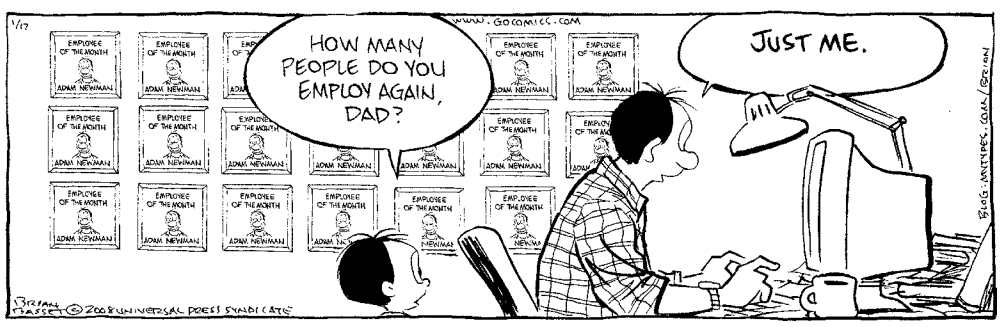
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

GOOD MORNING, SIR. SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU
MY, YOU ARE A STOUT YOUNG MAN
ACTUALLY, MORE OF A BIG LARD BOY!
I KNEW IT WOULDN'T LAST
© 2008 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
JIM DAVIS 1-17

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU EMPLOY AGAIN, DAD?
JUST ME.
EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH
ADAM NEWMAN
BRADY BASSET © 2008 KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Daytime drama
5 Marry
8 Dressed (in)
12 From one end to t'other
13 Uncultured
14 Medal earner
15 Eastern potentate
16 Savings acronym
17 Apiece
18 Job follower
20 Grate
22 Dated
26 February archer
29 Unseld of basketball lore
30 Grown-up elver
31 Unyielding
32 Conclusion
33 Back talk
34 Billboards
35 Time of your life?
36 Championship prize money
37 Broken
40 Actor Brad
41 Deepest within the self
45 "Groovy"
47 Charged bit
49 Notion
50 Boleyn or Bancroft
51 Seek damages
52 Kind
53 Act
54 "— Miniver"
55 History chapters

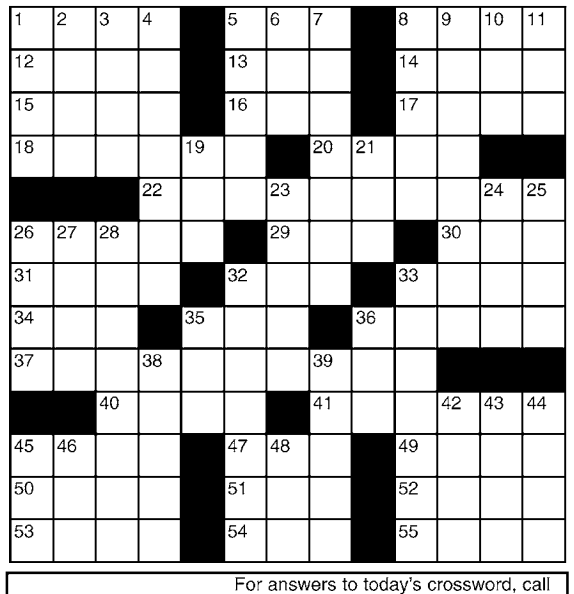
DOWN

1 Flight component
2 Resistance units
3 Carreras solo
4 Swipe
5 Type of watch
6 Listener
7 Caused to appear smaller
8 Lidded box
9 2008, for example
10 Curved line
11 Homer's interjection
19 Pie filling?
21 Balaam's mount
23 Landlord, e.g.
24 Not so much
25 Otherwise
26 Florentine farewell
27 Language of Pakistan
28 Put off
32 "I" strain?
33 Guess
35 Sternward
36 Corral
38 Lubricated
39 Eats in style
42 Stench
43 Antitoxins
44 Body art, for short
45 Scoundrel
46 Indivisible
48 "— Town"

Solution time: 25 mins.

		A	D	D			D	A	D			
	A	L	O	E		W	I	L	E	D		
T	R	A	W	L		A	S	L	E	E	P	
W	I	N	N	E	R	S	C	I	R	C	L	E
O	D	D		T	E	N	O	N		A	I	M
			G	E	L	T			I	D	E	S
	D	A	N	D	Y		O	A	T	E	S	
T	E	M	P			U	N	T	O			
E	M	U		B	U	N	C	H		S	P	A
L	O	S	E	R	S	W	E	E	P	E	R	S
	S	E	D	A	T	E		I	O	T	A	S
		D	I	C	E	D		S	L	U	M	
			T	E	D			M	O	P		

Yesterday's answer 1-17



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Zooey Deschanel, 28; Kid Rock, 37; Jim Carrey, 46; Susanna Hoffs, 49

Happy Birthday: You will have to dig deep to get the proper information, especially when it pertains to friends and relatives. This year, things will manifest themselves in a huge way, so be sure you are prepared to handle what's heading your way. Do what's best for yourself not the people who are trying to get you to do them favors. Your numbers are 14, 20, 28, 40, 43, 49

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Nothing is impossible and the people who try to tell you otherwise must be ignored. You are a driving force and, once you set your course, it isn't likely anyone can stop you. Start today. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Someone may pressure you to do something you don't want to do. Don't give in. Your time will be better spent learning something new that will help you engage in a professional challenge. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't waste time. The more proactive and productive you are, the easier it will be to interest others to get involved. A conversation with an expert will lead to an interesting proposal. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You can get things organized today. Tend to your personal paperwork and banking so you are fully aware of how much you have to invest or put into something that you've been wanting to do for some time. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): An emotional issue may cause havoc with a colleague. Make sure you are clear about what you are doing and what you expect everyone else to take care of. Love is in the stars but don't leave yourself in a vulnerable position. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): An opportunity to get away should be taken advantage of. On the road, work or just enjoy a little fun—both will be informative from many different perspectives. Avoid a family feud. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): If you don't need it, don't buy it. You will be tempted by what others have. Don't be silly when it comes to cash. Overreacting will not get you ahead or get you what you want. Love is in the picture. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Do as much as you can by phone, mail or visiting someone with whom you can close a deal. Your family will not understand or agree with what you are doing. Be secretive until you have everything in place. The end result will help to sway the skeptics. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Allow yourself space to do things and room to expand. Someone may question what you are doing but, if he or she can't see your vision, perhaps you shouldn't involve him or her. Productivity will be what counts. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You should be able to make money, come into money or collect money today. Real estate, investments and taking care of your personal assets will pay off. A change at home will make your life easier and more rewarding. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Upset will hit hard if you let your emotions take over and leave you in a vulnerable position when discussing future plans with a loved one. Be direct. Use reverse psychology and you will stand a better chance of getting your way. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Someone may play emotional mind games with you or be completely secretive regarding what he or she is up to. Investigate in order to put your mind at ease. Keep things to yourself and observe what others say and do. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You have stamina and courage. You are not afraid of the unknown or what you must do to reach your goals. You are a Good Samaritan, always searching for how you can better the world around you.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8	5						
					1			4
		4	3		2	1		5
	1	3				9		
				2				
		7				8	1	
8		2	9		3	5		
3			4					
						6	7	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	2	6	3	1	9	7	4	8
7	4	1	2	8	5	3	6	9
3	9	8	4	6	7	2	1	5
8	3	2	1	7	4	9	5	6
9	6	7	8	5	2	4	3	1
4	1	5	6	9	3	8	7	2
1	5	9	7	3	8	6	2	4
6	7	4	9	2	1	5	8	3
2	8	3	5	4	6	1	9	7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/16

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

LETTERMAN'S TOP 10 LIST **Solution: 7 letters**

A	C	N	Y	R	A	M	O	T	S	U	C	P	J	O
B	R	O	A	D	C	A	S	T	R	E	C	O	R	D
S	E	T	U	T	E	T	U	T	E	U	K	D	(L)	E
U	D	A	N	N	N	M	H	D	R	E	E	(A)	S	T
R	I	B	M	E	T	E	O	R	I	R	(T)	A	A	S
D	T	L	S	M	M	D	E	C	T	(E)	E	U	C	C
P	S	E	A	E	S	N	O	S	A	T	N	I	R	L
O	R	R	C	S	T	T	I	W	S	T	P	C	L	I
P	A	I	R	U	A	L	R	A	N	O	R	O	E	M
U	N	P	A	M	R	I	O	E	T	Y	R	A	O	A
L	D	S	S	A	T	R	T	I	N	R	N	T	H	X
A	O	N	T	T	V	S	K	S	M	D	E	O	E	C
R	M	I	E	A	E	S	W	M	U	R	D	T	R	D
O	Y	N	N	U	F	E	D	U	L	R	E	T	N	I
S	O	N	G	K	N	F	I	N	I	S	H	T	E	E

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Absurd, Amusement, Audience, Broadcast, Chart, Climax, Comedy, Countdown, Credits, Current, Customary, Drum, Entertainment, Finish, Funny, Guest, Inspire, Interlude, Irony, Joke, Late, List, News, Notable, Order, Popular, Present, Random, Record, Roast, Roll, Sarcasm, Satire, Skit, Song, Sorted, Staff, Start, Taunt, Tease, Term, Theme, Topics, Trend, Written

Yesterday's Answer: Popping

WONDERWORD offers the **"Book of Celebrities,"** for $5.95 each (US funds only) payable to Universal Press Syndicate plus $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to WONDERWORD, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-8734, ext. 6888. Order online at upuzzles.com.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*	
• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

Combo (Print and Online)*	
• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2

Radio (KCNM/KZMI)	
• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:

- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.

- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

FOR RENT RESIDENTIAL

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

2 storey home, newly renovated, 5 brm, 3bth, 2 car gr., water tank, near Dandan Elem. School, friendly neighborhood. Call 287-5744

WHATZIT Solution:
Home is where the heart is

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 VIDEO SALES CLERK (TH 4570)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; transportation self provided; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: E.W.G.E. Corporation dba Kevin's Video II @235-6988/234-6988/256-6988/235-6986.

NEW Rattan Furniture
FOR SALE
Expensive material
Call 235-4791,
433-9616, 285-7446

Saipan Chamber of Commerce
Coordinator

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is looking for a methodical and organized individual with initiative and excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

Job duties include:

- Performance of general office skills
- Ability to analyze and critique legislation, letters, and other documents
- Ability to work and communicate with various governmental agencies
- Provision of direct assistance to multiple Chamber committees
- Preparation of financial invoices; recordation of financial transactions
- Management of up-to-date, accurate, and organized files for committees, planning meetings, special projects, and workshops
- Supporting the Executive Director, Board of Directors, committees, and members

This is a highly demanding and challenging position. Successful applicants must be adept at working and communicating with the public, must be able to handle many projects simultaneously, and must be able to take initiative and work independently under the general direction of the Executive Director.

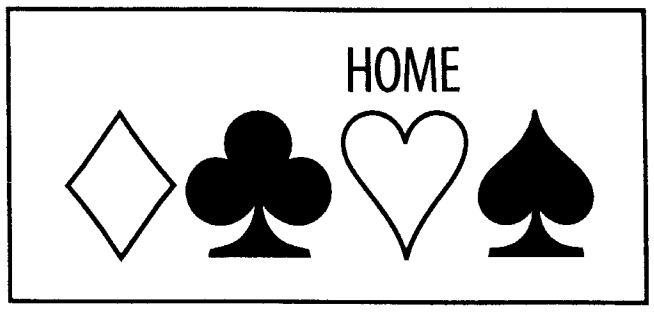
Minimum requirements:

- U.S. citizenship
- Excellent work ethic
- Valid CNMI driver's license, insurance, and own working vehicle
- Flexibility in work schedule
- Strong communication skills, including ability to read, write, and speak clearly in grammatically-correct English
- Competence in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook; working knowledge of computers and other office equipment
- College AA degree and/or office management experience desirable

Salary commensurate with experience. Application deadline is **Friday, January 18, 2008**. Application form available at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce office, Family Building, Garapan Street, Garapan, or online at www.saipanchamber.com.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



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Find today's solution in this section

1 ENGINEER (CONSTRUCTION) (TH 4571)
Salary:$1,800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical reimbursement & workers compensation. Contact: Wall Street Empire, Inc. dba D.C. Construction @234-3663.

1 UNDERWRITER (TH 4572)
Salary:$3.75-$9.10/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Century Insurance Co., Ltd. @234-0609.

1 (TOUR TRAVEL) COORDINATOR (TH 4573)
Salary:$4.50/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Century Travel Agency Inc. @236-2400.

1 SALES REP., MERCHANDISE (TH 4574)
Salary:$3.55-$3.95/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Cosmos Distr. Co., Ltd. @323-5950.

1 LANDSCAPER (TH 4575)
Salary:$3.55-$3.95/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @236-2400.

1 MECHANIC, HEAVY EQUIPMENT (TH 4576)
Salary:$3.55-$4.20/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @236-2400.

1 MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (TH 4577)
Salary:$3.55-$4.20/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @236-2400.

1 HOUSE KEEPER (TH 4578)
Salary:$3.55-$4.00/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @236-2400.

1 HOUSEWORKER (TH 4579)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Jerry Tan @236-2400.

1 HOUSEWORKER (TH 4580)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Jerry Tan @236-2400.

1 MANAGER, DEPARTMENT 1 (TH 4581)
Salary:$1,970.00-$2,170.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 CLERK, DOCUMENTATON BILL (TH 4582)
Salary:$3.55-$4.80/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE (TH 4583)
Salary:$3.55-$8.00/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 CLERK, DOCUMENTATION BILL (TH 4584)
Salary:$3.55-$5.25/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 SHIPPING SUPERVISOR (TH 4585)
Salary:$3.55-$6.05/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Consol. Trans. Serv. Inc. @322-1690 (L. Base)/234-2808 (Air).

1 CARGO HANDLER (TH 4586)
Salary:$3.55-$4.10/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (TH 4587)
Salary:$3.55-$5.75/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 PASSENGER SERVICE AGENT (TH 4588)
Salary:$3.55-$4.30/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 CARGO HANDLER (TH 4589)
Salary:$3.55-$4.10/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 PASSENGER SERVICE AGENT (TH 4590)
Salary:$3.55-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 CARGO HANDLER (TH 4591)
Salary:$3.55-$4.10/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation provided & medical. Contact: Pacific Oriental Inc. @288-0360 to 0362.

1 GENERAL MANAGER (TH 4592)
Salary:$2,000.00/monthly. Benefits: Workmen's compensation & medical are provided by the employer. Contact: Mac-US Int'l. Inc. dba New City Int'l Const. @288-0191.

1 (ASST.) GENERAL MANAGER (TH 4593)
Salary:$1,700.00/monthly. Benefits: Workmen's compensation & medical are provided by the employer. Contact: Mac-US Int'l. Inc. dba New City Int'l Const. @288-0191.

1 OPERATION MANAGER (TH 4594)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation & medical are provided by the employer. Contact: Mac-US Int'l. Inc. dba New City Int'l Const. @288-0191.

1 CONST. WORKER (TH 4595)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation & medical are provided by the employer. Contact: Mac-US Int'l. Inc. dba New City Int'l Const. @288-0191.

1 HOUSEWORKER (TH 4596)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: ER provide housing; ER provide food & medical reimbursement. Contact: Mark B. Hanson @233-8600.

1 MASON (TH 4597)
Salary:$3.55-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; employee provided food; workers compensation & medical insurance provided by employer. Contact: ECM International Corp. dba ECM Construction @235-9294.

1 VIDEO SALES CLERK (TH 4598)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; transportation self provided; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: E.W.G.E. Corporation dba Kevin's Video II @235-6988/234-6988/256-6988/235-6986.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 DISPATCHER (TH 4599)
Salary:$3.05-$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Saipan Cool Water & Ice, Inc. dba Saipan Cool Water & Ice @888-0379.

1 WASHER (TH 4600)
Salary:$3.05-$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Saipan Cool Water & Ice, Inc. dba Saipan Cool Water & Ice @888-0379.

2 DELIVERY WORKER (TH 4601)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Saipan Cool Water & Ice, Inc. dba Saipan Cool Water & Ice @888-0379.

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1 TOUR MANAGER (TH 4602)
Salary:$650.00-$800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Pil Corporation dba Kan Tour @483-1234.

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1 GENERAL MANAGER (TH 4603)
Salary:$650.00-$1,800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Jaeyoon Corporation dba BSA @483-9130.

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1 TOUR MANAGER (TH 4604)
Salary:$650.00-$1,800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Korea Tourism, Inc. dba Koreana Tours Bureau @233-3004.

1 GENERAL MANAGER (TH 4605)
Salary:$650.00-$1,800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Korea Tourism, Inc. dba Koreana Tours Bureau @233-3004.

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1 COOK (TH 4606)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Manju P. Hom dba Java Joes @235-5098.

1 F&B MANAGER (TH 4607)
Salary:$6.91/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Manju P. Hom dba Java Joes @235-5098.

3 BARISTA (WAITRESS OR WAITER) (TH 4608)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Manju P. Hom dba Java Joes @235-5098.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (TH 4609)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical expense. Contact: Juan L. Ada dba House Worker @234-5036 or 287-5799.

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1 PLUMBER (TH 4610)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical expense & worker compensation. Contact: Juana S. Muna dba House Rental @235-1505.

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1 FARMER (TH 4611)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical expense. Contact: Juana S. Muna dba Farmer @235-1305 or 287-5799 (Mary Ada).

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1 HOUSE WORKER (TH 4612)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical expense. Contact: Juana S. Muna dba House Worker @235-1305/287-5799.

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1 (NURSERY/DAY CARE SCHOOL-ATTENDANT) MANAGER (TH 4613)
Salary:$1,000.00-$1,500.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical expense & workman compensation. Contact: Chunlan Wen Cabrera dba Ever Green Day Care Center @235-2798.

1 GENERAL MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (TH 4614)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical expense & workman compensation. Contact: Chunlan Wen Cabrera dba Ever Green Day Care Center @235-2798.

2 NURSERY/DAY CARE SCHOOL ATTENDANT (TH 4615)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical expense & workman compensation. Contact: Chunlan Wen Cabrera dba Ever Green Day Care Center @235-2798.

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1 ASSISTANT TIRE REPAIRER (TH 4616)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation & medical expense. Contact: Phillip A. Fejeran Jr. dba J&J Tire Shop @235-1283.

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1 BLDG. MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (TH 4617)
Salary:$3.55-$3.75/hour. Benefits: Self provide housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: AA Enterprises, Inc. @322-4447.

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1 SCUBA DIVING INSTRUCTOR (TH 4618)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Medical expense & workers compensation employer provided. Contact: Marianas Seas Adventures Inc. @233-0577.

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2 COOK (TH 4619)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: J.T.M. Corporation @233-5436.

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1 SCUBA DIVING INSTRUCTOR (TH 4620)
Salary:$650.00-$800.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical expenses & workers compensation employer provided. Contact: Aqua Del Rey Saipan, Inc. @233-7040.

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1 (MARINE) SPORTS INSTRUCTOR (TH 4621)
Salary:$634.40-$1,000.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Mermaid Saipan Ent., Co., Ltd. @322-0563.

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1 MECHANICAL ENGINEER (TH 4622)
Salary:$1,700.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Eaulands CNMI Inc. @322-0018.

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1 CIVIL ENGINEER (TH 4623)
Salary:$1,800.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Sanki Company Ltd. @233-3296.

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2 BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (TH 4624)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workman's compensation provided. Contact: Martha's Retail Shop, Inc. @234-9774.

2 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (TH 4625)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workman's compensation provided. Contact: Martha's Retail Shop, Inc. @234-9774.

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1 ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN (TH 4626)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical; surety bond; & worksmen compensation. Contact: ASG Corporation dba Elite Printing @288-6465/2677.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (TH 4627)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; & workmen's compensation. Contact: Pamela C. Sablan @235-9493.

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1 SALES ASSOCIATES (TH 4628)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical expense & workmen compensation. Contact: EQ Construction Corp. dba Our Daily Bread Bakery @234-8828/234-8827.

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1 LAUNDRY WORKER (TH 4629)
Salary:$3.55-$3.85/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical insurance; workers compensation; sick leave & vacation leave. Contact: Tropical Laundry & Linen Supply Co., Ltd. @322-3077/8.

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5 WAITRESS/WAITER (TH 4630)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing; self provided food; medical & worksmens compensation. Contact: RPCF, Inc. @234-9127.

3 CARPENTER (TH 4631)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing; self provided food; medical & worksmens compensation. Contact: RPCF, Inc. @234-9127.

1 ELECTRICIAN (TH 4632)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing; self provided food; medical & worksmens compensation. Contact: RPCF, Inc. @234-9127.

9 MASON (TH 4633)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/monthly housing; self provided food; medical & worksmens compensation. Contact: RPCF, Inc. @234-9127.

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1 FOOD SERVER (TH 4634)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Theresa R. Dela Cruz dba Cruz Catering Services @235-1679.

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1 ELECTRICIAN (TH 4635)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & worksmen compensation. Contact: GPPC, Inc. @234-7900.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (TH 4636)
Salary:$3.05-$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Blue Ocean, LLC dba Blue Ocean @483-3493.

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1 WAITER/WAITRESS (TH 4637)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employee provided housing; employee provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Piao Investment Corp. @285-9308.

1 JANITOR (TH 4638)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employee provided housing; employee provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Piao Investment Corp. @285-9308.

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1 GEN. MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (TH 4639)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employee provided housing; employee provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: ISA Enterprises Inc. dba Beau Global Services @285-9308.

1 GEN. MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (TH 4639)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employee provided housing; employee provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: ISA Enterprises Inc. dba Beau Global Services @285-9308.

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1 CONTROLLER (TH 4640)
Salary:$700.00-$1,500.00/monthly. Benefits: $10.00-$50.00/gasoline monthly; $50.00-$350.00/housing monthly; workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan, Inc. @234-7053.

1 TOUR COORDINATOR (TH 4641)
Salary:$700.00-$2,000.00/monthly. Benefits: $10.00-$50.00/gasoline monthly; $50.00-$350.00/housing monthly; workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan, Inc. @234-7053.

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1 SALES REPRESENTATIVE (TH 4642)
Salary:$3.55-$4.11/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; medical benefits & worksmen compensation. Contact: Transamerica (Saipan) Corp. @234-1629.

1 SALES SUPERVISOR (TH 4643)
Salary:$3.55-$5.33/hour. Free housing; medical benefits & workmens compensation. Contact: Transamerica (Saipan) Corp. @234-1629.

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1 MAINTENANCE (TH 4644)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical benefits. Contact: American Sunny Corporation @287-0909.

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1 CIVIL ENGINEER (TH 4645)
Salary:$3.55-$6.50/hour. Benefits: Worksmens compensation & medical. Contact: Allied Construction Corp. @234-7492.

1 KITCHEN HELPER (TH 4646)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Worksmens compensation & medical. Contact: Allied Construction Corp. dba Barnys Pizza @234-7492.

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1 WAITRESS/WAITER (TH 4647)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: American K&W Corp. @233-9468.

1 MASSEUSE/MASSEUR (TH 4648)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Paid medical & workers compensation. Contact: American K&W Corp. @233-9468.

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1 ASSISTANT MANAGER (TH 4649)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical insurance & workers compensation. Contact: American K&W Corp. dba Color Beauty Salon @233-9468.

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1 FARMER (TH 4650)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/deduction housing; $100.00/deduction food & medical. Contact: Anthony T. Benavente @322-2663/285-5396.

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NMHC ITB 08-004
PURCHASE OF THREE (3) COMPUTERS

This Ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD Funds.

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors through its Chairman of the Board is soliciting competitive sealed bids from interested vendors for the purchase of three (3) computers for the Tinian Public Library.

Copies of the Scope of Work may be obtained at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Central Office in Garapan, Saipan during regular business hours, Monday thru Friday except CNMI Holidays.

Sealed bids must be marked "NMHC ITB-08-004". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950, no later than **10:00 a.m., local time, January 29, 2008.**

Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 29, 2008, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via email to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 29, 2008, AND must be received no later than February 7, 2008. **Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.**

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement of Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m., local time February 8, 2008. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:00 a.m. local time on January 29, 2008.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funding for this procurement. This project is funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible."

NMHC further notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contracts entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority and women-owned business enterprises (MBE/WBE) are afforded equal opportunity to submit bids and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, religion, gender, age, disability or national origin.

The Government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any defects in the said proposals, if in the sole opinion of NMHC, to do so would be in its best interest. All proposals will become the property of the Government.

/s/
Manuel A. Sablan
Chairman of the Board

/s/
Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement & Supply

Congress aims at Tejada, Clemens, Bonds

WASHINGTON (AP)—Taking on baseball's steroids problem once again, Congress kept the finger-pointing and tough questioning to a minimum. Maybe that's because the people under the most scrutiny this time—Miguel Tejada, Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens—were nowhere to be seen.

Commissioner Bud Selig and union leader Donald Fehr accepted responsibility for the sport's drug boom and the author of the Mitchell Report defended his findings in the same wood-paneled House hearing room that hosted a far longer and far more contentious session in March 2005.

It didn't take long for the focus to shift to players Tuesday.

The hearing opened with word that Congress wants Tejada, the 2002 AL MVP, investigated for lying to federal authorities. The first witness, former Senate majority leader George Mitchell, testified he believes a former trainer's allegations that he injected seven-time Cy Young Award winner Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone. And Selig told lawmakers that Bonds' San Francisco Giants should have reported concerns about the home run king's personal trainer.

The 4-hour, 15-minute session before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee also exposed what might be the latest drugs abused by the sport's stars: Ritalin and Adderall, stimulants better known as treatments for hyperactive kids. According to data provided to the committee by MLB and the union, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, there were 35 "Therapeutic Use Exemptions" for drugs in 2006, of which 28 were for ADD and ADHD medications. In 2007, the exemptions skyrocketed to 111, of which 103 were for ADD and ADHD.

"It seems to be a little bit odd, said Dr. Gary Wadler, chairman of committee that determines the World Anti-Doping Agency's banned-substances list. "I'm the guy who made the issue three years ago about amphetamines, and baseball said they didn't have a problem with greenies."

One of Mitchell's recommendations was that baseball needs an independent agency to handle drug testing, and the data about ADD drugs supports that, Wadler said.

"This demands an explanation. There's something fundamentally wrong them going from 28 to 103," Wadler said. "If we had this percentage increase in the general population, it would be on the evening news as a national epidemic. It's an outrageous number."

Overall, though, Selig and Fehr found a far friendlier audience than they did on March 17, 2005, when they were chastised and grilled by the same committee for a lax steroids program. That 11-hour hearing is best remembered for Mark McGwire's infamous and oft-repeated phrase, "I'm not here to talk about the past," and Rafael Palmeiro's finger-wagging denial of steroid use only months before failing a drug test.

"I'm proud of the progress we've made. I never delude myself, because I know there's always more work to be done," Selig said after Tuesday's hearing. "But when you think of where we were three years ago to where we are ... I appreciated the response from them today."

In the aftermath of the 2005 hearing, baseball and the union agreed to toughen their drug policy, including harsher penalties, more testing and a ban on amphetamines.

In his opening statement, Selig vowed to do more, including testing top prospects before the amateur draft. He also reiterated a willingness to test for human growth hormone "when a valid, commercially available and practical test for HGH becomes reality, regardless of whether the test is based on blood or urine."

Fehr, in turn, said the union has agreed to "allow players to be suspended for HGH use based on evidence other than a positive test."

He and Selig said they met in December to discuss the Mitchell Report's recommendations and plan to meet again.

"I hope we have all of this completed before spring training," Selig said.

Not every exchange with the lawmakers was easy.

"This scandal happened under your watch. I want that to sink in. It did," Maryland Democrat Elijah Cummings told Selig and Fehr, frequent adversaries seated side-by-side at the witness table after Mitchell finished. "Do you accept responsibility for this scandal or do you think there was nothing you could do to prevent it?"

Fehr paused for several seconds.

"Did we or did I appreciate the depth of the problem? ... The answer is 'No,'" Fehr replied. "It's a failure that we didn't, and it's a failure that I didn't."

Selig then followed, starting by saying he's agonized over the question.

"Do I wish we could have reacted quicker? Should we have? One could make the case," the commissioner said. "All of us have to take responsibility, starting with me."

Before any testimony, committee chairman Henry Waxman announced he and ranking Republican Tom Davis asked the Justice Department to look into whether Tejada lied to committee staffers when questioned in connection to Palmeiro's perjury case in 2005.

"Tejada told the committee that he never used illegal performance-enhancing drugs and that he had no knowledge of other players using or even talking about steroids," Waxman said. "Well, the Mitchell Report, however, directly contradicts key elements of Mr. Tejada's testimony."

Palmeiro said his positive test might have resulted from a B-12 vitamin injection given to him by Tejada—at the time, a teammate on the Baltimore Orioles—and the committee concluded there was insufficient evidence to refer Palmeiro's case to the Justice Department.

In the Mitchell Report, Adam Piatt, Tejada's former teammate with the Oakland Athletics, said he provided Tejada with steroids and HGH in 2003. Mitchell also included copies of checks allegedly written by Tejada to Piatt in March 2003 for $3,100 and $3,200.

"We will review and respond to the letter from Chairman Waxman and Rep. Davis," Justice Department spokesman Peter Carr said.

Late in the day came news that Tejada's older brother, Freddy, was killed in a motorcycle accident in the Dominican Republic, according to the Aguilas Cibaenas, the shortstop's winter league team. Tejada, scheduled to play Tuesday night, wasn't at the ballpark and could not immediately be reached for comment.

Waxman raised Bonds' name during Selig's appearance, asking the commissioner whether the Giants should have reported their concerns about Bonds' trainer, Greg Anderson, and the slugger's alleged steroid use to the commissioner's office.

"Of course," Selig responded.

Pressed by Waxman about whether Giants general manager Brian Sabean violated baseball rules by not doing so, Selig said: "It's a matter that I have under review," perhaps hinting that Sabean or other team officials could face discipline.

Waxman also expressed concern that, according to the report, Giants owner Peter Magowan's lawyer called Mitchell to say Magowan "misspoke" about Bonds' possible use of steroids.

"This incident shows why it's important for baseball's management to take the problem of steroids seriously. It's possible that the BALCO scandal could have been averted if Brian Sabean and Peter Magowan acted in a responsible fashion," Waxman said. "Instead, they seemed more intent on protecting Bonds."

Magowan issued a statement that did not directly address the Bonds-Anderson issue, saying instead the Giants "pledge to embrace every necessary reform to address" the steroids problem.

Since last month's release of the Mitchell Report, the focus largely has been on Clemens, who has been asked to testify at a Feb. 13 hearing, along with his former trainer, Brian McNamee. Clemens has vehemently denied McNamee's allegations.

"You continue to feel comfortable with Mr. McNamee's credibility?" Waxman asked.

"We believe that the statements provided to us were truthful," Mitchell said, adding McNamee was interviewed three times.

AP

Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig, left, and Donald Fehr, executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association, are sworn in before testifying before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Woman: Pacman Jones punched her at strip club

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—A woman is seeking an arrest warrant against suspended Tennessee Titans cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones, claiming he punched her at an Atlanta strip club.

Fulton County Magistrate Court officials told The Associated Press on Tuesday that Wanda S. Jackson asked for the warrant after a Jan. 3 altercation at the Body Tap Strip Club.

Jackson, an attorney, says in her filing that she was in the club's office when an angry Jones accused managers of stealing his money and bracelet.

"I was sitting in the office and he lunged at me numerous times in an effort to do grave bodily harm," Jackson wrote in the warrant application filed Jan. 7. "Veronica Jones, an owner, went into the hall to deal with a member of his entourage. I followed to gawk. He was in the hall, surprisingly reached over or around a security guard and sucker punched me in my left eye."

Jackson told police the next day she was at the club because she was handling a divorce case that involved Adam Jones. No one could be reached Tuesday afternoon at the club's listed phone number.

"Mr. Jones, according to Ms. Jackson, was at the Body Tap Club and she and Mr. Jones got into an argument at the club and Mr. Jones struck Ms. Jackson in the left eye, causing a bruise around her left eye," according to the police report.

Jackson did not immediately return a phone message requesting comment. Jones' attorney Manny Arora said no warrant has been issued against his client.

Norris Arnold, a court support manager for Fulton County, said a magistrate judge will review Jackson's application on Feb. 8 to determine whether the warrant will be filed.

Last month, Jones pleaded no contest to a disorderly conduct charge related to a strip club shooting in Las Vegas that left club manager Tommy Urbanski paralyzed.

Also Tuesday night, the NFL filed a motion in Nevada to be dismissed from a lawsuit by Urbanski.

A judge already dismissed the Titans from the suit last Wednesday, saying the team couldn't be responsible for Jones' actions at the Minxx Gentleman's Club last Feb. 19.

The lawsuit filed Oct. 19 sought unspecified damages from Jones, the NFL, the Titans and the owners of Harlem Knights, a Houston strip club that rented the Las Vegas club for the party the night of the shooting, during NBA All-Star weekend.

A hearing for the NFL's motion is scheduled for Feb. 20 in Clark County District Court.

Clark County District Attorney David Roger said the new accusations could affect his criminal case against Jones. With his plea, Jones agreed to a year probation, random drug testing, community service and anger management classes.

"We have negotiated with Mr. Jones in exchange for his assistance in an attempted murder case. This doesn't help his case if he is found guilty," Roger told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Jones has been arrested six times since being drafted sixth overall in 2005, including two arrests in Georgia in 2006 that the Titans did not learn about until 2007. Jones was suspended for the 2007 season by NFL commissioner Roger Goodell in April.

"As we have said throughout his suspension, we will not comment on Adam Jones until he is reinstated by the commissioner," the Titans said in a statement Tuesday afternoon.

Jones was allowed to go to the Titans' headquarters once their season ended with an AFC wild-card loss in San Diego on Jan. 6. But the NFL plans to review his status following the Pro Bowl.

Nadal, Henin advance at Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Every previous time Rafael Nadal has played the Australian Open, he's gone deeper into the tournament than the time before.

He advanced to the third round Wednesday with a 6-0, 6-2, 6-2 win over Frenchman Florent Serra, showing signs that he could make the two stages that he's never reached at Melbourne Park.

Nadal made the third round in his debut in 2004, the fourth round in '05 and, after missing a year, made the quarterfinals last year.

Now he wants to up the ante.

Against Serra, he displayed some of the shots he hopes will help him end Roger Federer's dominance at every Grand Slam not played on clay.

Nadal has been ranked No. 2 for the last three seasons and is the only player to beat top-ranked Federer in the last 10 Grand Slams—in the finals at Roland Garros the last two years.

His heavy slice and topspin that work so well on clay are well suited to the new, blue Plexicushion surface at Melbourne Park, which seems to be slower-paced and not as spongy as the old Rebound Ace.

He yielded only 10 points while racing through the first set in 22 minutes, committing just four unforced errors.

Serra got a loud ovation when he held serve for his first game while already down a break in the second set.

AP

Rafael Nadal of Spain returns to Florent Serra of France during their second round Men's Singles match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008.

Nadal's retrieving skills often left Serra muttering to himself and he had no answer in the last game when the 21-year-old Spaniard set up triple-match point with a backhand winner and closed with an ace, his ninth.

"Yeah, very happy," Nadal said. "I'm trying to play a bit more aggressive and definitely serving better, which is good."

Justine Henin had a little more difficulty closing out her 30th consecutive win.

Top-ranked Henin, who skipped Melbourne last year because she was going through a divorce and had to default in the 2006 final because of a stomach illness, needed four match points to clinch a 6-1, 7-5 second-round win over Russia's Olga Poutchkova.

She was broken at love when serving for the match at 5-3, then set up double match point with a curling forehand winner in the next game, but Poutchkova ran off four points to level at 5-all.

That's when Henin shifted gears.

She held at love for 6-5 and then, with Poutchkova only a point from forcing a tiebreaker, won four straight points to finish.

"I played a very good first set, then I lost some intensity," Henin said. "She took her chances. It was tough at the end."

The defending French and U.S. Open champion next faces 25th-seeded Francesca Schiavone of Italy.

Amelie Mauresmo, who won when Henin pulled out of the 2006 final, needed 10 match points to beat Yaroslava Shvedova of Russia.

Patty Schnyder, seeded 15th and a semifinalist here in 2004, went down to Australia's Casey Dellacqua, 4-6, 7-5, 8-6.

Two U.S. men lost early Wednesday, but Mardy Fish won his second-round match 6-1, 6-2, 6-3 over No. 11 Tommy Robredo.

Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga followed his opening-round upset over No. 9 Andy Murray by hitting 54 winners and 14 aces in a 6-4, 7-6 (4), 6-2 win over Sam Warburg.

No. 24 Jarkko Nieminen of Finland beat Jesse Levine 6-2, 7-5, 7-6 (2).

No. 20 Ivo Karlovic and No. 23 Paul-Henri Mathieu also advanced.

Henin's only loss since May was a semifinal upset to Marion Bartoli at Wimbledon.

Venus Williams, who beat Bartoli in the Wimbledon final, played her first match in three years at the Australian Open on Tuesday night.

She downed China's Yan Zi 6-2, 7-5 but hit 29 unforced errors and only 19 winners.

"Errors happen," Williams said. "That's tennis."

She was a first-round loser here in 2006 and missed last year because of injuries, watching from a distance when sister Serena made a stunning run to the title.

Serena Williams, unseeded and ranked No. 81 when she beat top-seeded Maria Sharapova in last year's final, played China's Yuan Meng in the second round later Wednesday.

No. 5 Sharapova has the toughest second-round match of the highly ranked players, facing 2000 Australian champion Lindsay Davenport in the night match on center court.

Davenport is in her first Grand Slam and only fifth tournament since returning to the tour following the birth last June of her son, Jagger. She has a 19-1 record with three titles in that time, but needed three sets to beat Italy's Sara Errani in the first round.

Federer wasted no time in the start of his bid for a third consecutive Australian Open title.

Sick and tired of talk about his stomach bug, Federer wanted to show he was in Grand Slam form.

He left no doubts with a 6-0, 6-3, 6-0 win over Argentina's Diego Hartfield on Tuesday night. In eight previous trips to Melbourne, he had never swept the opening set.

Federer hadn't played a competitive match in two months. He withdrew from the Kooyong exhibition last week after being told by doctors he had food poisoning, causing speculation about his fitness.

"I'm 100 percent OK," said Federer, who is 26-1 in the last four Australian Opens. "I could have maybe played on Saturday, but I didn't want all the fuss—the media, analyzing my game, thinking they know best and all that."

Just before Federer went on court, things turned violent among spectators during a match between Greece's Konstantinos Economidis and seventh-seeded Fernando Gonzalez of Chile, last year's losing finalist.

Tournament officials said play was interrupted for five minutes while police subdued three people with pepper spray. Five were evicted and three were banned from the rest of the tournament.

James scores 51 points to lead Cavaliers past Grizzlies in overtime

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—LeBron James scored a season-high 51 points, including 25 in the fourth quarter and overtime, to lead Cleveland to a 132-124 victory over Memphis in the NBA on Tuesday.

James made 18 of 28 shots and also had nine assists and eight rebounds as the Cavaliers handed their Grizzlies their fifth straight loss. James' career high is 56 points against Toronto in March 2005.

The teams were tied at 113 at the end of regulation, as James missed an attempted game-winner from 19 feet as time expired.

Cleveland shot 53 percent in winning its ninth game in the last 12.

Knicks 105, Wizards 93

In New York, the home side won consecutive games for only the third time this season by downing Washington.

Jamal Crawford scored 29 points for the Knicks, who will go for their first three-game winning streak of the season Wednesday at New Jersey.

The Knicks built a 22-point lead in the first half, then turned back every push by Washington, which had its three-game winning streak snapped.

Pistons 103, Raptors 89

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Detroit bounced back from an embarrassing loss by beating Toronto.

Richard Hamilton scored a season-high 39 points for the Pistons, who responded after scoring just 65 points in being beaten by last-placed New York in their previous game.

Hawks 104, Nuggets 93

In Atlanta, the home team held off a late rally by Denver to win.

Joe Johnson scored 22 points for the Hawks.

Denver trailed by 25 early in the third quarter but cut the lead to eight points with 1:50 left. But Allen Iverson and J.R. Smith were ejected with 38.9 seconds left and the Nuggets could get no closer.

Magic 102, Bulls 88

In Orlando, Florida, Rashard Lewis scored 26 points to help Orlando rout Chicago.

Dwight Howard added 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Magic, which had lost five of the previous six games.

Chicago was outscored 32-10 in the decisive third period.

76ers 111, Rockets 107

In Houston, Philadelphia rallied from 16 points down to beat Houston.

Andre Miller scored 26 points while Samuel Dalembert added 19 points and blocked a shot in the final seconds.

The Sixers snapped a seven-game losing streak and a five-game road skid.

Warriors 105, Timberwolves 98

In Minneapolis, Baron Davis had 22 points, nine assists and a season-high five steals to lead Golden State past Minnesota.

Minnesota has lost three in a row. Losing comes in bunches for the struggling Wolves, who haven't halted a losing streak at fewer than five games this season.

The Warriors scored 31 points off Minnesota turnovers to win their third straight game as they try to keep pace with the surging Los Angeles Lakers in the Pacific Division.

Clippers 97, Suns 90

In Los Angeles, the home side knocked Phoenix out of first place in the Western Conference.

Sam Cassell broke out of a shooting slump in a big way, scoring 32 points. The 38-year-old Cassell, who was 7-for-31 in his previous four games, made 15 of 21 shots to help the Clippers snap a four-game losing streak.

The Suns slipped half a game behind the Lakers atop the Pacific Division.

Nene Web site: forward had tumor removed

ATLANTA (AP)—Denver Nuggets forward Nene underwent surgery Monday to remove a testicular tumor, and a biopsy will determine if it was cancerous. The Brazilian player took an indefinite leave of absence Friday, and there is no timetable for his return.

"Nene is recovering well and in good condition," Dr. Fernando J. Kim said.

The operation was done at Denver Health Medical Center. Kim said a "right testicular mass was found incidentally and it was managed surgically." The tumor was found last week in an exam by team physician Dr. Saurabh Mangalik.

"I want to thank my fans, my teammates, the Nuggets organization and everyone that's been supporting me," Nene said in a statement released by the team before Tuesday night's game at Atlanta.

"My victory will represent their victory as well. Thanks for being with me in this moment. I will remember all the appreciation. I thank God that we could detect this at such an early stage."

Denver coach George Karl said he first talked with team captains Carmelo Anthony, Allen Iverson and Marcus Camby about Nene's condition on Friday, before the team's home game against Orlando.

"I can't deny that talking about Nene was more emotional than some other circumstances I've been presented," Karl said. "I think the team, I don't know what the word is, but it was a very quiet day. The game that night, the personality was introverted, introspective."

Iverson said Nene's surgery has forced players to think about more than games.

"We just want to make sure he does everything he has to do to get well," Iverson said. "This whole thing is so much bigger than basketball. This is life. All we can do is be there to support him and be a phone call away if he needs us."

Karl and his son, Coby, have been treated for cancer. George Karl has had surgery for prostate cancer.

"As a cancer survivor and someone who has watched his son go through two cancer-related surgeries, I know firsthand the emotions and fears that you feel when someone says you might have it," Karl said. "Our job now is to support Nene and be there for him as a family. Basketball is at the bottom of the totem poll at a time like this. We just want him to get healthy."

Nene is averaging 6.4 points and 6.4 rebounds. He missed 22 games earlier this season after undergoing left thumb surgery. He was out for all but one game of the 2005-06 season after tearing a knee ligament, and he was sidelined for 27 games the season before with a variety of ailments.

Freedom Run on MLK Day this Monday

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The 8th grade class of the Saipan Seventh-day Adventist School will hold its 2nd Annual Freedom Run on Martin Luther King Jr. Day this coming Monday, Jan. 21,

The 5-kilometer run is a fund-raising event for the 8th grade class trip as well as an event to pay tribute to the great civil rights leader.

The 2nd Annual Freedom Run will begin at 5:15pm at the Garapan Fishing Base and end at the Kilili Beach pavilion.

The registration fee is $10 and all finishers will be eligible for prizes at a drawing to be held after the race.

Registration for the run will begin at 4:30pm. Participants may pre-register at the Saipan SDA School or Saipan SDA Dental Clinic. When the race is finished transportation back to the Garapan Fishing Base will be provided for those who need it.

The 8th grade class is raising funds for its annual class trip. In the past, classes have visited Japan, the Philippines, Bali, Australia, Palau, Hawaii, Thailand, Singapore, and South Korea.

This year, the students hope to visit New Zealand. The students will spend several weeks learning about the geography, history, and culture of New Zealand before traveling to the island nation to learn about and experience the land of the Kiwis firsthand.

The first Freedom Run was held last year on Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the funds raised from that event helped the students at SDA take a class trip to Singapore in March 2007.

"Fun runs are fun, they're good exercise, and you get to win prizes at the end," said 8th grade class president Joy Lacorte. "Plus it will help the 8th grade a lot."

Class sponsor Sean Maycock added, "This run really is for everyone, whether you're an avid runner or someone who just wants to enjoy a nice walk along the beach with their family."

For more information about the 2nd Annual Freedom Run, contact Sean Maycock at the Saipan SDA School (234-7326 or 285-3127).

Rogolifoi reminds team of today's SML meeting

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Major League coordinator Tony Rogolifoi is reminding all teams to attend today's meeting for the 3rd Annual Budweiser SML in order to finalize the 2008 season.

The meeting will be held at 6:30pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium where the 25-player rosters of each team and the $800 tournament fee are due to be submitted. Waiver forms and ground rules will also be given to the team manager, coach, or representative during the meeting.

Rogolifoi is eyeing to open the league on Feb. 25, Monday, where a total of nine teams might join the competition that could stretch the season to five months.

Seven teams have already confirmed of joining with two more in the process of finalizing their respective lineups. Representatives of the two other teams are required to attend Thursday's meeting.

The confirmed teams are the defending champion Tanapag Falcons, runner-up Bob O'Connor Masters, the PTI Kings (formerly known as the Bud Kings), 2005 titlist Ford Rangers, D9ers, Jaguars, and a new Korean team-composed mostly of Koreans living on Saipan.

The Feb. 25 opening game of the 3rd Annual Budweiser SML will feature a rematch of last year's finals as the Falcons face off with the Masters in the scheduled 6:30pm contest.

The schedule of the whole season will be released as soon as organizers get the total number of competing teams.

The Tanapag Falcons are expected to field the same championship-winning team next season.

Last season, the third seeded Falcons completed their own happily-ever-after ending by sweeping the fourth-ranked Masters in their best-of-five title series.

The Falcons rallied back from a 9-2 deficit to squeeze out a 10-9 win in Game 3 over the Masters to complete a three-game sweep.

The Falcons drew first blood in their title series against the Masters when they squeezed out an 11-inning 16-15 win.

Game 2 was a different story as the Falcons' relied on a Mike Pangelinan double in the top of the ninth and their pitchers in the bottom half of the inning to score a 12-10 come-from-behind win.

Other competing teams last season were the 2006 champion Bud Kings, the Ford Rangers, the Korean Jaguars, and the Young Guns.

For more information, call Rogolifoi at 288-3515 or email him at tonyrogolifoi@yahoo.com.

Pacquiao, Marquez to meet March 15 for WBC super featherweight title

BEVERLY HILLS, California (AP)—Manny Pacquiao already has beaten two Mexican fighters. Juan Manuel Marquez promises he won't be the third.

Pacquiao and Marquez stepped nose-to-nose Tuesday in officially announcing their rematch for March 15 at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas—nearly four years after their first fight ended in a 12-round draw.

Since then, Marquez won the WBC super featherweight crown, which will be contested in March, and Pacquiao earned the nickname "The Mexican Killer" after knocking out Erik Morales twice and beating Marco Antonio Barrera.

Pacquiao fielded perhaps the most intriguing question of Tuesday's press conference, when a reporter asked: "If you beat Marquez, would you ever dare vacation in Mexico?"

Pacquiao grinned, then said: "Maybe, but with more bodyguards."

Marquez wasn't amused, saying Pacquiao is not "The Mexican Killer."

"He didn't beat me the first time," Marquez said.

Pacquiao knocked Marquez down three times in the first round when they fought in May 2004. Marquez survived and the bout wound up as one of the best of that year.

2008

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and angler Jack Diaz of the *Ana Maria* who reeled in the catch of the day when they hoisted their 22.55-lbs. wahoo out of the water, and their efforts on the sea brought them a hefty $600 cash prize.

The crew of the *Ana Maria* wasn't the only group of gaffers to take home a share of the prize money, as captain Mark Hanson, Dave Banes, and Narong the Wahoo Wrangler took home $400 for weighing in the most pieces of pisces when they brought the Sea Amigo to the docks with three fish on board.

D9ERS

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Team Rubak when they scored a 14-9 win on Nov. 24 then scored their sixth straight win with a 15-6 decision on Dec. 15.

Team Rubak finished the season in second place with a 6-3 mark followed by the Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers' 3-6 slate and the 1-8 record of the Korean Dreams.

The Dreams are the clear underdogs in their matchup. Their pitchers need to contain the D9ers' batters, while produce more runs in order to pull off a major upset.

The Dreams finished with a 1-8 record with their lone win coming against Tigers on opening day.

Rubak holds a 2-1 edge against the Tigers where they scored consecutive hard-earned wins on Dec. 1, 19-13, and on Dec. 22, 18-15.

The Tigers avoided a sweep when they defeated Rubak, 21-11, on Jan. 4, which is a make-up game of their Nov. 11 match that was canceled due to rain.

The winners of both playoff matches will advance to the one-game finals on Jan. 23, Wednesday, at 6:30pm.

4 DEBUT

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24, 25-22, 9-15 win. Islanders and Ol'Aces overcame opening set losses to also win their debut.

Islanders escaped with a 21-25, 25-20, 15-13 decision against the Fanians in the first game, while Ol'Aces squeezed out a 20-25, 25-21, 16-14 win over Ma Numel'u.

League organizers decided to play all three sets no matter the outcome of the first two for tiebreaking purposes and at the same time give all players in each team ample playing time on the court.

NMIVA president Jon Cramer said the league is all about developing the CNMI volleyball program especially the youth. "Great turnout at the gym last night and some real close games. This league is going to be fun."

Despite being tied with four other teams with 1-0 records, Menudo currently leads the nine-team cast based on their three-set win over CH-Hammer. Cramer said league rules state the first tiebreaker is based on the number of sets won.

If a tie still occurs, then the second tiebreaker is used based on points against. Islanders are in second place after giving up two less points with 58 compared to the 60 by the Ol'Aces. Home Boyz is in fourth.

No Fear, Ma Numel'u, Fanians, CH-Hammer, and Beach Jammers—which drew byes—complete the cast of participating teams.

Home Boys cruised to an early lead in their game against No Fear and were a point away from claiming the first set when they allowed Freddy Pelisamen to mount a comeback that tied the game.

Pelisamen brought No Fear, which was trailing Home Boyz at 19-24, back in to the game scoring five straight points with two aces to tie the count.

Home Boyz, however, could not be denied of the win as Myron Laniyo and his crew wrapped up the contest after No Fear's planned attack failed to clear the net.

The same thing happened in the second set as Home Boyz once again led early and doused cold water on No Fear's repeated comeback tries to wrap up the match.

No Fear showed its fighting and aggressive form in the third set where they held on to win at 15-9.

Games today will have Menudo going up against the debuting Beach Jammers in the 6pm first game, while the opening day winner Islanders take on CH-Hammer in the 7pm match.

Opening day losers Ma Numel'u and No Fear take the court at 8pm, while Ol'Aces clash with Home Boyz at 9pm. Fanians will have a bye.

Games in the Men's Indoor Winter League are held every Tuesday and Thursday from 6pm to 9pm. The duration of the league will run for nine weeks with the Top 8 teams after the single-elimination round advancing in the playoffs on March 18.

Four games will be played every Tuesday and Thursday where one match would consist of two race-to-25 sets and the third and deciding set is first to make 15.

A separate women's division will start its games on Tuesday next week, Jan. 22, since there are only three teams that have confirmed participation.

Application and sign up are still open for other interested women's teams and coaches or team representatives. Those interested should call NMIVA president Jon Cramer to submit their lineup and entrance fee not later by 5pm today.

For more information, call Cramer at 235-6231 at ext. 5148 or e-mail him at seaexec@picsaipan.com or Janice Camacho at 868-9515 or 323-6565 or 66 or 67 or 68 or e-mail her at nonose98@gmail.com.

UPCOMING

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into practice the skills they had just learned.

Newman added the two skills that they focused on during boot camp were passing and dribbling. "Vanessa [Pritchard] and I oversaw the events of the boot camp, but the national team girls led the stations and [demonstrated] the skills."

She said they also had a referees' station, led by Northern Mariana Islands Football Association referees director Cathy Anderson and assisted by Steve McKagen and Dean Tenorio.

"Since we will be providing our own assistant referees for [the] league, we thought it would be good to have a station focused on the proper signals and use of the flags."

"Their [campers] enthusiasm for learning how to referee was high. Many commented on how much they learned about the rules of the game just from the 30-minute station."

Sablan said WFC officials were pleased by the turnout and they are expecting more women would register for the league this Saturday, which is the final day of the boot camp before the women's 7-on-7 league. "We encourage all women to register."

The WFC will also continue with the referee station, and will also focus on defense and shooting in the final day of the boot camp on Saturday, which will run from 9am to 11am.

Registration will continue on Saturday, and league officials expect another good turnout. The registration fee for the league is $10.

For more information about the 7-on-7 league, email Newman at rnewman112@hotmail.com or Vanessa Pritchard at holly_jollyvkp@hotmail.com.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	30	6	.833	_
Toronto	20	18	.526	11
New Jersey	18	19	.486	12 1/2
Philadelphia	15	24	.385	16 1/2
New York	11	26	.297	19 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	24	16	.600	_
Washington	20	17	.541	2 1/2
Atlanta	17	17	.500	4
Charlotte	14	23	.378	8 1/2
Miami	8	28	.222	14

Central Division

Detroit	29	10	.744	_
Cleveland	20	18	.526	8 1/2
Indiana	17	22	.436	12
Milwaukee	15	23	.395	13 1/2
Chicago	14	22	.389	13 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	25	11	.694	_
Dallas	26	12	.684	_
New Orleans	25	12	.676	1/2
Houston	20	19	.513	6 1/2
Memphis	10	28	.263	16

Northwest Division

Portland	23	14	.622	_
Denver	22	15	.595	1
Utah	22	17	.564	2
Seattle	9	28	.243	14
Minnesota	5	32	.135	18

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	26	11	.703	_
Phoenix	26	12	.684	1/2
Golden State	23	16	.590	4
Sacramento	15	21	.417	10 1/2
L.A. Clippers	11	23	.324	13 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Orlando 102, Chicago 88
Atlanta 104, Denver 93
Detroit 103, Toronto 89
New York 105, Washington 93
Cleveland 132, Memphis 124, OT
Golden State 105, Minnesota 98
Philadelphia 111, Houston 107
L.A. Clippers 97, Phoenix 90

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

Men's Volleyball Standings

	W	L	PF	PA	SW
Menudo	1	0	65	52	3
Islanders	1	0	61	58	2
Ol'Aces	1	0	61	60	2
Home Boyz	1	0	60	61	2
No Fear	0	1	61	60	1
Ma Numel'u	0	1	60	61	1
Fanians	0	1	58	61	1
CH-Hammer	0	1	52	65	0
Beach Jammers	0	0	0	0	0

PF-Points for
PA-Points allowed
SW-Sets won

SBA head pleased with business support

JON PEREZ

SBA president Jerry Tan and the King of the Lanes finalists rolls out the banner announcing Budweiser as the sponsor for the year-long roll off in 2008.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SBA president Jerry Tan, left, joins Queen of the Lanes finalists, from left, Diane Camacho, Gina Sablan, Elena Soll, Ron Cal, Emi Williams, and Gloria Omechelang.

Far left, Saipan Bowling Association president Jerry Tan, left, joins Prince/Princess of the Lanes participants, from left, Jamie Vales, Jeremy Williams, Zach Cruz, and Raphael Zapanta during Sunday's award ceremony at the Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V.

JON PEREZ

Left, SBA president Jerry Tan, center, receives the second place trophy from Philippine Bowling Association officials Gigi Zapanta, left, and Ador Dimaano. Fiesta Resort & Spa placed second in the recently concluded PBA-Budweiser Saturday Night League.

JON PEREZ

JON PEREZ

Queen of the Lanes runner-up Gina Sablan, right, poses with SBA president Jerry Tan.

JON PEREZ

Princess of the Lanes winner Jamie Vales, right, shows off her $200 cash prize and crystal trophy for winning the youth tournament.

JON PEREZ

Prince/Princess of the Lanes fourth placer Raphael Zapanta, right, joins SBA president Jerry Tan.

JON PEREZ

Prince/Princess of the Lanes second runner-up Zach Cruz enjoys a light moment with SBA president Jerry Tan.

JON PEREZ

Prince/Princess of the Lanes runner-up Jeremy Williams, right, poses with SBA president Jerry Tan.

JON PEREZ

A representative from Team D'Jar, left, receives the third place trophy from PBA official Ador Dimaano during the awards ceremony of the PBA-Budweiser Saturday Night League held simultaneously with the awarding of the SBA King, Queen, and Prince/Princess of the Lanes.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Saipan Bowling Association president Jerry Tan is pleased with the support being given by the local business community in various bowling events on Saipan.

Tan said even though the CNMI is experiencing tough economic situations, businesses are still sponsoring teams and helping the local bowling community in any way they can.

"Though we are facing tough economic times these businesses and individual sponsors continue to help us. Without their support there is no continuance in bowling events."

Tan said without the help of the sponsors it is tough to come up with prizes and other giveaways during the end of each season.

"With the help of these sponsors we were able to increase the number of active and committed bowlers," added Tan, during Sunday's award ceremony of the King, Queen, and Prince/Princess of the Lanes and the recently concluded 37th season of the Philippine Bowling Association-Budweiser Saturday Night League.

Tan also announced on Sunday that starting 2008, Budweiser would sponsor the monthly roll-off of the yearlong season of the King and Queen of the Lanes.

Tan said he is also pleased with the improvement of games of all bowlers. "There is an increase in their scores and we see more perfect bowlers. I am glad to see these results."

He challenged other bowlers to push themselves to improve and achieve the feat of their fellow bowlers.

Tan also recognized the work done by the husband-and-wife team of Ross and Gigi Zapanta, who always make sure prizes and other tournament details are all in order.

SBA head pleased with business support

Saipan Bowling Association president Jerry Tan is pleased with the support being given by the local business community in various bowling events on Saipan. 27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Congress aims at Tejada, Clemens, Bonds

Taking on baseball's steroids problem once again, Congress kept the finger-pointing and tough questioning to a minimum.

24

4 debut with wins in indoor volleyball

By JON PEREZ
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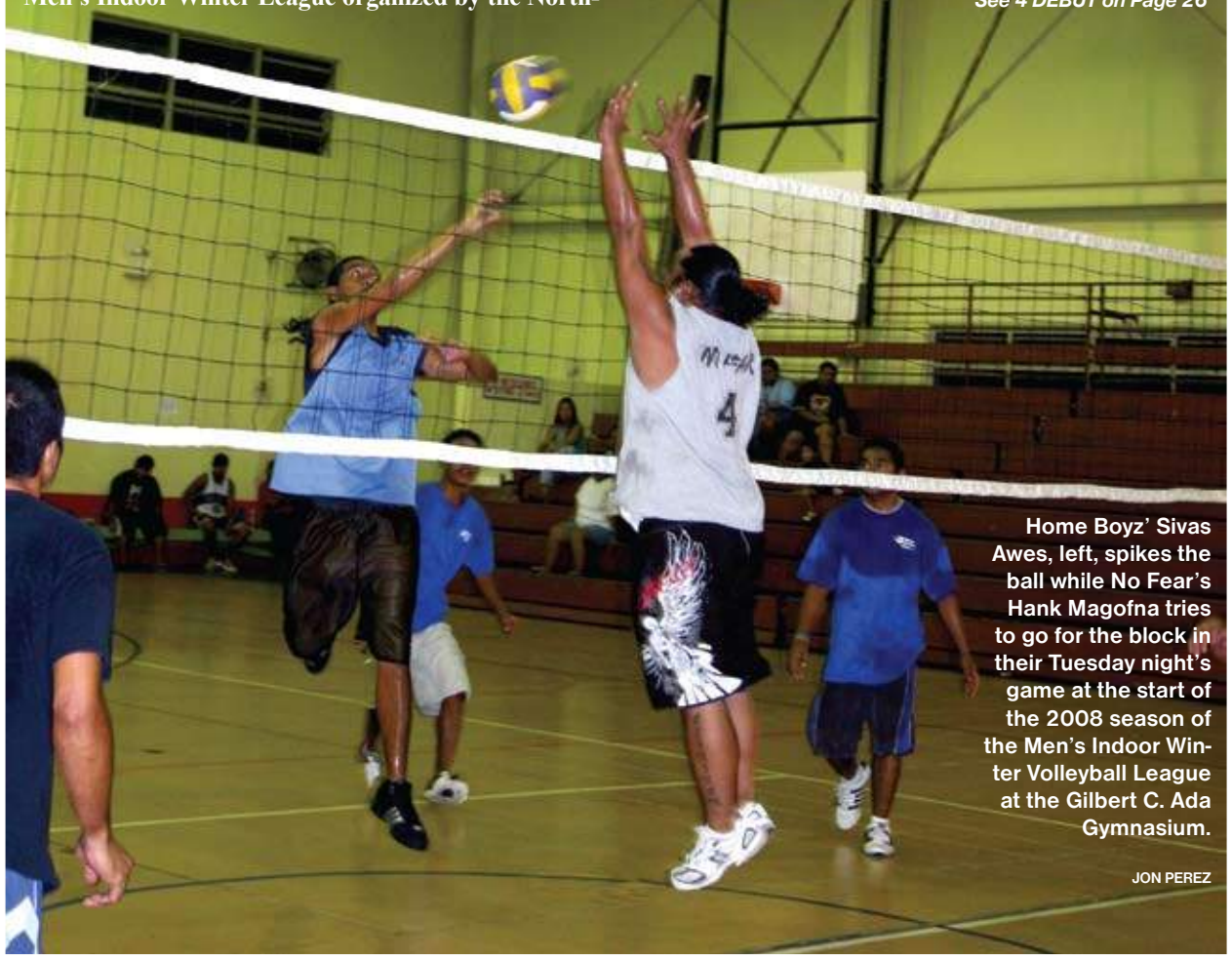
REPORTER

High-flying volleyball action opened Tuesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium with four teams recording opening day wins at the start of the Men's Indoor Winter League organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association.

Menudo scored a three-set sweep against CH-Hammer, while Home Boyz, Islanders, and Ol'Aces were pushed to the limit by their respective foes.

Menudo defeated CH-Hammer, 25-23, 25-20, 15-9, while Home Boyz failed to sweep No Fear in a 26-

See 4 DEBUT on Page 26



Home Boyz' Sivas Awes, left, spikes the ball while No Fear's Hank Magofna tries to go for the block in their Tuesday night's game at the start of the 2008 season of the Men's Indoor Winter Volleyball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

JON PEREZ

2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby this Saturday

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

After the success if the inaugural Wahoo Jackpot Derby in December 2006, the Saipan Fishermen's Association will be staging the 2008 edition of the event this Saturday, Jan. 19, in the waters of the Marianas.

SFA is inviting all ardent anglers to take part in the almost yearly treat this weekend. The association said placement prizes are up for grabs in the second running of the event.

But before any of the reeling action gets underway in the 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby this weekend, a captains' meeting will be held tomorrow, Jan. 18, 5pm at the Smiling Cove Marina.

The cost to participate in the derby is $100 for a crew of four and $25 for each additional angler. SFA said that registration will be held the same time as the captains' meeting and no registration will take place the following day on derby day.

SFA would like to thank the Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, DPS Boating Safety Division, Emergency Management Office, and the Marianas Visitors Authority for supporting the event.

For more information about the 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby, contact MVA's Frank Tudela at 664-3200/01 or e-mail at ftudela@mymarianas.com.

Ten boats and many more fisherman heeded John D. Guerrero's call and took to the water in December 2006 in search of a winner as participants of the inaugural Wahoo Jackpot Derby.

The top prize of the inaugural competition went to captain John Tenorio

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MARK RABAGO
A wahoo is being weighed in this file photo from last year's Saipan International Fishing Derby.

Upcoming season excites women's football officials

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Officials of the Women's Football Committee is expecting an exciting season as they prepare for the opening of the 7-on-7 league, which is set to kick off on Jan. 26.

League officials started 2008 with the first day of a two-Saturday boot camp on Jan. 12 where close to 40 female players in different levels attended the training session at the American Memorial Park field.

Becca Newman, who is co-organizing the league with Vanessa Pritchard, and WFC chair Francine Sablan said they were glad to see the interest shown by all female players.

"[The] boot camp started off very successfully. There were several new faces to the sport, as some of the [veterans] rose to the challenge and brought a friend," said Newman.

Sablan said the campers had a great time. "If you were at the boot camp you would've saw women of all ages laughing, playing, and having a good time."

"You could feel the excitement to play in the air and see the spirited smiles of all players. These women are playing for fun and for fitness and the excitement is contagious."

Newman said that most of the members of the women's national team were there to help out at the stations, and played in a 7-on-7 scrimmage where campers got the chance to put

See UPCOMING on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants of the Women's Football League boot camp learn the basic dribbling skills from veteran Emily Gries during Saturday's session at American Memorial Park field.

D9ers-Dreamers playoff match moved to Friday

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Yesterday's scheduled playoff match between the Saipan Stevedore D9ers and the Viva Poker Korean Dreams was moved to tomorrow due to the ongoing renovation at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

RELATED NEWS
Rogolifoi reminds team of today's SML meeting.
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The game will still be played at the FMP field at 6:30pm, while the Saturday playoff match schedule of the Atty. Johnson Toribiong-sponsored Team Rubak and the Atty. Bob O'Connor-backed Tigers remains the same.

Masters Baseball League coordinator Tony Rogolifoi, in an email yesterday, said Division of Sports and Recreation director Joe Lizama informed him of the change of schedule on Tuesday.

Lizama informed Rogolifoi that the change of schedule is to allow the visiting Korean baseball team LG Twins to complete the renovation of the field. Rogolifoi is apologizing for the last-minute information.

The second ranked Rubak clashes with the Tigers on Saturday, Jan. 19, at 9am.

The D9ers went on an eight-game winning run after suffering a 5-8 loss to the Atty. Johnson Toribiong-sponsored Team Rubak on Nov. 4 to win the pennant.

The D9ers did not lose after that and twice defeated their opening day tormentors. The D9ers got back at

See D9ERS on Page 26